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Three generations of planter -businessmen: The Tayloes, slave labor, and entrepreneurialism in Virginia, 1710-1830

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**THREE GENERATIONS OF PLANTER-BUSINESSMEN:
THE TAYLOES, SLAVE LABOR, AND ENTREPRENEURIALISM IN VIRGINIA,
1710-1830**

A Dissertation

Presented to

**The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia**

In Partial Fulfillment

**Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

by

Laura Croghan Kamoie

1999

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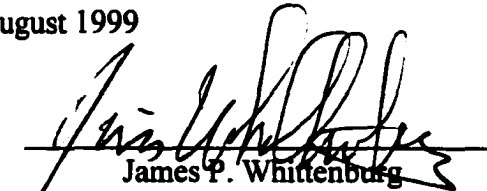
APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy


Laura Croghan Kamoie

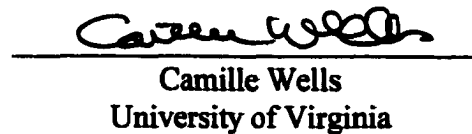
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To Brian

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the entrepreneurial estate-building activities of three generations of the Tayloe family of Virginia from the 1710s to the 1820s. The three John Tayloes were model planter-businessmen—that is, they combined mixed commercial agriculture with a variety of business enterprises in an effort to secure long-term financial security and social status for themselves and their heirs. This diversified approach to plantation management characterized early Virginia's "culture of progress"—an early American business culture interpreted in many different ways throughout the colonies (and later the states) that had the pursuit of a better life as its organizing premise.

The Tayloes were not alone in their ironmaking, shipbuilding, land speculation, investing, and craft-service activities. Instead, the three generations of Tayloe planter-businessmen represent the activities, approaches, and values of the elite planter class of early Virginia.

For each of the Tayloes, slave labor served as the fundamental resource for successful enterprise. The presence of large populations of enslaved African Americans enabled the Tayloes and other planters to branch out from staple agriculture and ultimately necessitated that they continue to do so. Slaves demonstrated their abilities, became central to the daily operations of the South's business culture, and made the enterprises planters founded profitable.

Planter-businessmen as individuals founded businesses that were usually complementary in some way to their holdings in land and slaves. For more capital-intensive enterprises, they called on their familial, social, and political networks for partners. Recognizing the potentially dangerous fluctuations of the tobacco market, planters were apt to attempt new endeavors in good times and bad and rarely abandoned new businesses simply because the tobacco market rebounded. They kept their finger on the pulse of the market, braved risk, and attempted to keep up with the latest technology. In all instances, planters' non-tobacco activities provided an important buffer between the uncontrollable weather, shipping, and prices associated with tobacco agriculture and their families' future security. The institution of slavery certainly placed some structural limits on planters' entrepreneurial imaginations. However, whether compared with northern farmer-businessmen prior to the antebellum period or set against the definitions of Virginia's own slave society, early southern planter-businessmen exhibited rational and progressive economic behavior.

**THREE GENERATIONS OF PLANTER-BUSINESSMEN: THE TAYLOES, SLAVE
LABOR, AND ENTREPRENEURIALISM IN VIRGINIA, 1710-1830**

INTRODUCTION

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE IN EARLY VIRGINIA

John Tayloe III died in his sleep at the Octagon House in Washington City in March of 1828. Friends and family in the city and in Richmond County, Virginia, seat of the family home named Mount Airy, mourned the loss of this respected Virginia gentleman. Tayloe accomplished much in his 67 years. He graduated from Eton and Cambridge, raised thirteen children, held various military offices, and served as a Federalist senator in the Virginia state legislature. He also managed over 20 plantations in three states staffed by more than 700 slaves and numerous overseers, craftsmen, agents, and other employees.

John Tayloe was reputed to have an annual income of more than \$75,000, derived from his vast interests in real estate and other business enterprises. At various times, he owned or invested in internal improvement projects, banks, hotels, mines, and ironworks. Many of these concerns were based in Washington City, a new locus of business and entrepreneurialism, while others were located in rural Virginia. Tayloe even considered investment opportunities as far away as North Carolina and Mexico. He insisted on having the finest things, but was adamant that “it won’t do to throw away money in Trifles.”¹ John Tayloe was a businessman--a planter-businessman--and when he died, he

¹John Tayloe, Mount Airy, to Charles Wingman, Messrs. Hodgson & Thompson, Baltimore, June 7, 1801. Tayloe Family Papers, Reel 5, Frames 206-207. (Hereafter TFP, Reel: Frame) Unless otherwise noted,

left more to his children than businesses, land, and slaves. He also left to them a legacy of risk-taking, business savvy, ambition, and entrepreneurialism.

John Tayloe III was not the creator, but instead the heir of this family legacy. Tayloe's father and grandfather demonstrated enterprise, risk-taking, and pursuit of profit as well. Indeed, the family's propensity for innovation and entrepreneurialism can be found as far back as the London background of William Tayloe the Younger (1645-1710), father of John Tayloe I.² The first and second John Tayloes (1687-1747, 1721-1779) lived during eras when tobacco dominated the economic activity of the Virginia planter class. Yet they also speculated in land, functioned as landlords and merchants, founded and operated ironworks, invested in companies promoting industry, and operated a shipbuilding business--all this alongside their management of the more traditional agricultural interests.

The economic elite, of which the Tayloes were certainly at the very top in Virginia, committed early to the spirit of entrepreneurialism. This spirit of entrepreneurialism encompasses the whole set of diversified activities—agricultural, industrial, and commercial—that eighteenth-century planters pursued in their efforts to create long-term wealth and social status for their families. Planters had a variety of interests that competed with planting, and they did not necessarily think that they had to

research for this study was conducted from the microfilm series, Records of Southern Ante-Bellum Plantations, Series M, Part 1: The Tayloe Family. Originals are located at the Virginia Historical Society.

²Martin H. Quitt, "Immigrant Origins of the Virginia Gentry: A Study of Cultural Transmission and Innovation," William and Mary Quarterly 45(4) (October 1988), 629-655. Quitt investigated the backgrounds of several hundred seventeenth-century Virginia leaders and concluded that their experiences as younger sons and London inhabitants produced an inclination towards innovative attitudes and values. It is likely not coincidence, then, that several of the families he analyzed later found themselves among the wealthiest one hundred Virginia planters by the 1780s. See Chapter 6 below.

choose between plantations and business enterprise. Plantation agriculture itself was, after all, a commercial and market-oriented pursuit, and nothing in their identity as planters kept them from wearing other mantles. Indeed, as Lorena Walsh has argued, the story of eighteenth-century Virginia is the story of planters' efforts to battle diminishing profits from tobacco.³ Planters recognized the cyclical, boom/bust nature of the tobacco market and those of sufficient means diversified their investments to soften the blow of low demand, falling prices, lost shipments, and bad weather. The elite Virginia planters moved steadily away from sole dependence on tobacco and toward agricultural diversification and business investment.⁴ They understood that the prize for successful risk-taking and investment was wealth and social standing.

The greatest wealth went to those individuals who combined their land and slaves with larger opportunities in commerce and industry. In 1954, Jackson Turner Main investigated the wealth of Virginia's one hundred wealthiest men of the revolutionary era. Based on census and tax returns, Main's assessment necessarily designated land and slaves as the foundation of planter wealth.⁵ Further research into the activities of the cohort, however, demonstrates that almost all of Virginia's wealthiest planters were also

³Lorena S. Walsh, "Plantation Management in the Chesapeake," *Journal of Economic History* 49 (1989), 394; Richard L. Bushman, "Markets and Composite Farms in Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly* [hereafter *WMQ*] 55 (3) (July 1998), 366-369.

⁴For detailed studies of agricultural diversification in Virginia, Maryland, and South Carolina, see Peter V. Bergstrom, "Markets and Merchants: Economic Diversification in Colonial Virginia, 1700-1775," unpublished dissertation, University of New Hampshire, 1980; Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815* (Chapel Hill, 1993); Gloria Main, *Tobacco Colony: Life in Early Maryland, 1650-1720* (Princeton, 1982); Russell Menard, *Economy and Society and Early Colonial Maryland* (New York, 1985); Carville Earle, *The Evolution of a Tidewater Settlement System: All Hallow's Parish, Maryland, 1650-1783* (Chicago, 1975).

⁵Jackson Turner Main, "The One Hundred," *WMQ* 3d ser., 11 (1954), 354-384.

businessmen and entrepreneurs. Like the Tayloes, these men were not just planters, they were planter-businessmen, who founded and invested in enterprises ranging from simple operations such as fisheries to complex and costly establishments like ironworks.⁶

Virginia planters understood that the tobacco economy alone could not sustain their long-term social and material condition.

As with all case studies, it can be problematic to project the life experiences of an individual or family onto the larger groups of which they were members. In their ambitions, wealth, and political power, the Tayloes were not typical of the majority of Virginia planters. As the analysis of the 100 will demonstrate, however, the Tayloes were representative of the slaveholding elite. These were the men who ruled the government, shaped the culture, and possessed the largest share of wealth and power in Virginia. In addition, the elite were well attuned to Atlantic markets from the beginning, and thus possessed critical knowledge concerning the economic and political affairs of their colony and the Atlantic world. Their knowledge and power enabled them to create a society in which forced black labor was available to channel the colony's resources into a variety of income-generating enterprises, especially tobacco plantations. Far from participating in the market reluctantly, planter-businessmen realized that production for market—whether of tobacco, iron, or other commodities—was central to their ability to sustain a comfortable standard of living, or “competency,” over generations.⁷ Since the elite were

⁶Bushman, “Markets and Composite Farms in Early America,” 368; Ronald Hoffman, “Charles Carroll the Settler,” *WMQ* 3d ser., 45 (2) (1988). Virginia planters were not the only southern entrepreneurs. See Lacy Ford, “The Tale of Two Entrepreneurs in the Old South: John Springs III and Hiram Hutchison of the South Carolina Upcountry,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 95 (July 1994), 221; Keach Johnson, “Genesis of the Baltimore Company,” *Journal of Southern History* 19 (May 1953), 162.

⁷Daniel Vickers, “Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America,” *WMQ* 3d ser., 47 (1990), 3–4 and *passim*.

the most heavily involved in the market, they were the first to diversify their activities in order to soften the impact of market fluctuations, poor crop yields, and other factors beyond their control.

Because, until recently, much of the historiography on the economic behavior of southern planters has focused on the antebellum period, recognition of diverse economic pursuits is not the lay or in some cases the general academic view of colonial southern planters. Some historians have characterized southern planters as alternately resistant to, threatened by, and skeptical of economic development in ventures that would have supported economic diversification and ultimately industrialization.⁸ Several questions have dominated the historiographical debate surrounding planters and the southern economy: First, was the South's economy capitalist? Second, why did the South lag behind the North in industrialization? Third, and closely related to the first two questions, what was the impact of slavery on southern culture generally?

Eugene Genovese has been the most influential contributor to these questions in terms of the debate his arguments have engendered. On more than one occasion Genovese has argued that southern plantation agriculture was not capitalist because it was

⁸Ronald L. Lewis, Coal, Iron, and Slaves: Industrial Slavery in Maryland and Virginia, 1715-1865 (Westport, Conn., 1979), 209, 215-217; Frederick F. Siegel, The Roots of Southern Distinctiveness: Tobacco and Society in Danville, Virginia, 1780-1865 (Chapel Hill, 1987), *passim*; Peter Parish, "The Edges of Slavery in the Old South: Or, Do Exceptions Prove Rules?" Slavery and Abolition 4(2) (1983), 116-117. Among those characterizing southern planters as entrepreneurial are: Hoffman, "Charles Carroll the Settler"; Main, Tobacco Colony; Menard, Economy and Society in Early Colonial Maryland; Aubrey C. Land, "Economic Base and Social Structure: The Northern Chesapeake in the Eighteenth Century," Journal of Economic History 25 (1965), 639-654; Christine Daniels, "Gresham's Laws: Labor Management on an Early-Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Plantation," Journal of Southern History 62 (May 1996), 205-238; Edwin Perkins, "The Entrepreneurial Spirit in Colonial America: The Foundations of Modern Business History," Business History Review 63(1) (Spring 1989), 164; Louis Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall: A Virginia Planter of the Eighteenth Century (Charlottesville, 1965), vii; and Jackson Turner Main, The Sovereign States, 1775-1783 (New York, 1973), 44-46.

based on unfree slave labor. The existence of slavery limited the distribution of wealth as well as the impetus for enterprise and profit maximization, and therefore the South had neither the means nor the local markets for industrialization. While the South had a market economy, it also had a slave society, and the latter restricted the economy and dominated economic, class, political, and social relations.⁹

More or less in agreement with Genovese's assessment, a number of historians have furthered his analysis of the southern economy. Some have argued that pre-industrial society was dominated by a communal rather than a capitalist mentalité. Individual economic pursuits were limited by family and community needs and interests.¹⁰ Other historians have argued that the South was characterized by a sort of "flawed" capitalism, wherein a number of structural problems inhibited diversification and the development of a strong manufacturing sector. Namely, the South was hobbled by an unprofitable slave labor system, lack of capital, lack of entrepreneurial talent, limited market-related infrastructure, and planter resistance to rectifying these problems.¹¹

Asserting that pre-industrial societies were already capitalist in terms of functions and attitudes, yet another group of historians joined the debate. In their analysis, market

⁹Eugene Genovese, The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South (New York, 1965), *passim*. See also Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "The Fruits of Merchant Capital: The Slave South as a Paternalist Society," in J. William Harris, ed., Society and Culture in the Slave South (London, 1992), 13-47; and Genovese and Fox-Genovese, "The Slave Economies in Political Perspective," Journal of American History LXVI (1979), 7-23.

¹⁰James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-Industrial America," WMQ 3d ser., 35 (1978), 3-32; Christopher Clark, The Roots of Rural Capitalist: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860 (Ithaca, N.Y., 1990), *passim*. While the previous works focus on New England, their comparisons to and interpretations of the historiographical debate about the nature of pre-industrial society in the South are relevant. See also Allan Kulikoff, "The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America," WMQ 3d ser., 46 (1989), 120-144.

¹¹Fred Bateman, James Foust, and Thomas Weiss, "The Participation of Planters in Manufacturing in the Antebellum South," Agricultural History 48 (April 1974), 278; Gavin Wright, The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1978), *passim*.

values outweighed communal values, and economic individualism, profit maximization, and entrepreneurialism dominated the outlook and activities of pre-industrial Americans.¹² Southern planters were rational and effective businessmen who achieved high levels of productivity in the field in which the South had a comparative advantage--namely, agriculture. Slavery was profitable in both the agricultural and industrial realms and drove diversification because of planters' need to keep their laborers employed year-round.¹³

None of these interpretations is completely persuasive. Southern planters were competent managers of large commercial enterprises who invested significant amounts of capital, produced goods for international markets, and acquired and profitably employed large numbers of workers. While plantations, like any business, had room for improvement, commercial plantation agriculture was the most productive and profitable enterprise of the colonial era. On the other hand, slavery did place some logistical limitations on the types of businesses and entrepreneurial decisions planters could make. Early Virginia planters were entrepreneurial within the confines of slavery, a system planters believed could form the basis of a modern society and economy.¹⁴

¹²James Lemon, "Comment on James Henretta's 'Families and Farms: Mentalité in Pre-Industrial America,'" *WMQ* 3d ser., 37 (1980), 688-700; Perkins, "The Entrepreneurial Spirit in Colonial America," 160-186; Charles Grant, *Democracy in the Connecticut Frontier Town of Kent* (New York, 1961), 40-44. Like the New England studies above, these studies compare and contrast these economic issues in the North with those in the South.

¹³Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston, 1974); Robert William Fogel, "American Slavery: A Highly Developed Form of Capitalism," in Harris, ed., *Society and Culture in the Slave South*, 78-85; Ralph V. Anderson and Robert Gallman, "Slaves as Fixed Capital: Slave Labor and Southern Economic Development," *Journal of American History* 44 (June 1977), 24-46; Robert Gallman, "Slavery and Southern Economic Growth," *Southern Economic Journal* XLV (1979), 1007-1022; Robert S. Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South* (New York, 1970), 147-182.

¹⁴Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit*, 7.

Furthermore, these interpretations sometimes rely on anachronistic assumptions or false dichotomies. For example, many historians in the non-capitalist camp assume the inevitability of industrialization which in turn assumes the inevitability of capitalist free labor. Furthermore, instead of taking colonial people and activity on their own terms, historians have looked at the antebellum South and made generalizations across space and time.¹⁵ Economic development is at root a cultural expression of the values of a people and the social process through which those values are acted upon. Therefore, this study will analyze what constituted “progressive economic behavior” in the context of eighteenth-century social and cultural rules that created such definitions, not based on historians’ modern notions or on what occurred a century later. It is also important to note that the failure of some planter-businessmen to create financial and social security for their families through their various entrepreneurial activities does not diminish the significance of their attempts.

False dichotomies create further historiographical difficulties. For one thing, industrialization is usually assumed to be a northern phenomenon, while the South is by comparison lazy, backward, or at best, agrarian. Once again, this analysis rests on the comparison of the antebellum northern and southern societies. However, many historians of the colonial and early national North find that the two sections experienced developmental similarities before about the 1820s, with the first hints of divergence appearing only in the 1790s. In his study of Philadelphia, Thomas Doerflinger stated that,

¹⁵See especially Genovese, The Political Economy of Slavery. T. H. Breen further discusses the interpretative difficulties of these historiographical problems. See T. H. Breen, Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of the Revolution (Princeton, 1985), 20. Richard Bushman’s critique of the concept of the market revolution is effective for just this reason. See Bushman, “Markets and Composite Farms in Early America,” 351-352, 354, 364.

as of the Revolution, the South was an unrivaled example of enterprise which slowly “stagnated” during the following half century.¹⁶ Robert Starobin found that southern industrial growth “parallel[ed]” that of the North until about 1815, while T. Stephen Whitman found similarities until the 1820s.¹⁷ In her analysis of industry in the Potomac River Valley, Frances Robb discovered that the activity level, size, and placement of factories there was similar to elsewhere in the United States during the period between 1780 and 1820.¹⁸

In her impressive study of agricultural innovation, Joyce Chaplin argued that southerners’ economic activities were not perceived as “antimodern” until well after the Revolution, and that southerners themselves did not become “defiantly antinorthern and antimodern” until the nineteenth century.¹⁹ James Henretta argued that cultural constraints “in every area” of the North limited involvement with the market economy, which in turn constrained entrepreneurialism and diversification.²⁰ Carol Sheriff, in her study of the Erie Canal, discovered that rural northerners did not have much experience or familiarity with technological advances and that most manufacturing still occurred at the household level before the 1820s. When work began on the canal in 1817, “the most

¹⁶Thomas Doerflinger, A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia (Chapel Hill, 1986), 345.

¹⁷Starobin, Industrial Slavery in the Old South, 187-188; T. Stephen Whitman, “Industrial Slavery at the Margins: The Maryland Chemical Works,” Journal of Southern History 59(1) (February 1993), 32.

¹⁸Frances C. Robb, “Industry in the Potomac River Valley, 1760-1860,” unpublished dissertation, West Virginia University, 1991, 11-12.

¹⁹Chaplin, An Anxious Pursuit, 15, 19.

²⁰Henretta, “Families and Farms,” 15.

intricate mechanisms” with which most northerners would have been familiar were grist mills, a situation not wholly different from that in the South.²¹

European scholars have recognized that regions which in earlier times were on a similar developmental path could for a variety of reasons begin to diverge. The South was not alone in the world on the list of places that did not become industrial centers, and the fact that it did not industrialize to the extent the North did says nothing about the level of rural industry which might have existed previously. Comparisons with export-oriented economies in Ulster, Brittany, and Flanders demonstrate that industrialization was not a given or automatic development. Franklin Mendels and Hans Medick, scholars of “proto-industrialization” or early rural industry which helped pave the way for industrialization, found that regions which had similarly produced rural industries could experience “broad differences in the extent and pace of industrialization in phase two.” The availability of natural resources and access to new resources and technologies determined whether a region might successfully make the transition from rural industry to industrialization. Robb found that it was precisely these factors, and not “plantation mentality,” which kept the Potomac River Valley from industrializing further.²²

²¹Carol Sheriff, The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862 (New York, 1996), 29. Disagreeing with Sheriff’s interpretation on this point, Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman stressed the significance of technological innovation and machine diffusion in the urban North after 1800. See Earle and Hoffman, “The Foundation of the Modern Economy: Agriculture and the Costs of Labor in the United States and England, 1800-1860,” American Historical Review 85 (1980): 1055-1094; and “Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South,” Perspectives in American History 10 (1976): 7-80.

²²Franklin Mendels, “Proto-Industrialization: The First Phase of the Industrialization Process,” Journal of Economic History XXXII (1972), 241-261, quote from 246; Hans Medick, “The Proto-Industrial Family Economy: The Structural Function of Household and Family During the Transition from Peasant Society to Industrial Capitalism,” Social History 3 (1976), 291-315; and Robb, “Industry in the Potomac River Valley,” 13.

A second set of interpretative difficulties for the study of the southern economy revolve around the dichotomies of rural/urban and agriculture/industry. By the mid-nineteenth century, America's urban areas offered industries the labor, capital, marketing, and other resources necessary to centralize in production and specialize in operations and products.²³ This mature urban industrial system, however, had important rural roots. As Jonathan Prude pointed out, "America's industrial revolution had rural origins." Prude argued that New England's earliest factories were located as late as the 1850s in small villages or in hinterland communities.²⁴ The same was true in the Chesapeake, where, for example, ironworks were commonly known as iron plantations, indicating both their industrial and rural nature. Thomas Dublin seconded Prude's assessment and argued that historians "would do well to avoid thinking in terms of a strict opposition between urban industry and rural agriculture in this [early national] period." Dublin found that outworking, a new productive activity rural families engaged in for traditional reasons, dominated early New England industries and ultimately assisted in the spread of capitalist practices and values during the early decades of the 1800s.²⁵

In his study of the tensions between agriculture and industry in Rhode Island, Gary Kulik argued that the owners of industrial enterprises were almost always also farmers, and that the industries they operated--grist mills, saw mills, fulling mills, ironworks--were tied closely to agriculture and part of a "single and largely

²³Walter Licht, Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century (Baltimore, 1995), 26-35.

²⁴Jonathan Prude, "Town-Factory Conflicts in Antebellum Rural Massachusetts," in Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude, eds., The Countryside in the Age of the Capitalist Transformation (Chapel Hill, 1985), 71-72.

²⁵Thomas Dublin, "Women and Outwork in a Nineteenth-Century New England Town: Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire, 1830-1850," in Ibid., 52.

undifferentiated economy.”²⁶ Again, comparisons with Europe are informative. Mendels and Medick argued that rural industries based in household economies dominated the eighteenth century. These industries were market-oriented but also traditionally organized. Mendels’s and Medick’s work demonstrates that industry could have rural and agricultural roots.²⁷

The point is particularly informative for the South, which had only a few areas that could legitimately be labeled “urban” before the nineteenth century. While some historians have pointed to the South’s lack of urban areas as proof of its economic backwardness,²⁸ scholars of the colonial era have found that traditionally “urban” economic activities were sustained in rural communities and on plantations. Most farmers and planters combined their farming activities with other trades and industries. “Urban” goods and services were available in the South, but they were available in the countryside.²⁹ The Tayloe family represents a particularly explicit example of this phenomenon, as neighbors in Richmond and surrounding counties regularly came to Mount Airy for blacksmithing, shoemaking, merchant, and other services.

I will address these historical and historiographical issues by assessing them within the context of early America. Instead of assuming the failure of southern

²⁶Gary Kulik, “Dams, Fishes, and Farmers: Defense of Public Rights in Eighteenth-Century Rhode Island,” in *Ibid.*, 33-35, quote on 33.

²⁷Mendels, “Proto-Industrialization,” 241; Medick, “Proto-Industrial Family Economy,” 296-297. See also Licht, *Industrializing America*, 26.

²⁸Jacob Price, “Economic Function and the Growth of American Port Towns in the Eighteenth Century,” *Perspectives in American History* 8 (1974), 165. Price asks, “Why were there not more merchants, traders, and artisans in the Chesapeake?” assuming that the lack of towns points to their absence.

²⁹Earle and Hoffman, “Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South,” 13.

industrialization and then looking for explanations of the phenomenon, I will examine the extent, significance, nature, and operations of rural industry and enterprise in early Virginia through the activities of the Tayloe family. For example, I will analyze the nature and volume of business done in the iron, mill, fishing, shoemaking, and smithing industries, and assess their relative importance by comparing them with the Tayloes' tobacco production. The scope of the study ranges from the 1710s through the 1820s, spanning three generations of the Tayloe family and encompassing several important shifts in planter class identity, the main approaches and economic activities of planters, and slave participation in entrepreneurialism. Each Tayloe patriarch lived in a different historical context and consequently made different decisions and held different goals influenced by the culture, politics, society, and economy of his time.

John Tayloe I (1687-1747) was the founder of the family fortune. The first Tayloe's main goal was to diversify his economic activities in order to provide some security against total dependence on tobacco. By successfully branching out into other opportunities, Tayloe hoped to establish himself and his family among the elite of Virginia. He therefore amassed a sizeable estate, served as a merchant (including of slaves) and merchant's agent, managed an ironworks for a group of British investors, and seeing the possibilities of that industry, built a works of his own. Tayloe grew tobacco, corn, and oats on his lands, as well as smaller quantities of wheat, peas, and beans. He operated an active sawmill that supplied his works with the wood necessary to make charcoal, as well as a grist mill available to his neighbors for a fee. He was an avid speculator in western lands and made an easy profit by leasing hundreds of acres to

tenants. Tayloe's sizeable slave population made diversification possible, as he had a ready supply of laborers he could assign to new tasks or sell for investment capital.

John Tayloe II (1721-1779) was a planter-businessmen, having learned from his father's example the merits of a diversified approach to the family business. While in many ways he became the prototypical southern gentleman, he in no way idly rested on his father's achievements. The younger Tayloe vastly expanded the holdings of the estate in land and slaves. He furthered his father's legacy at the ironworks and founded another furnace and forge of his own. He began a shipbuilding enterprise, using eight sloops and schooners for his own transportation needs, and established several new mills across his lands. He speculated and invested in land and industrial investment companies, and rented over forty tracts of land to tenants during his lifetime. Tayloe cultivated large quantities of tobacco, corn, and wheat on his lands, and his plantation at Mount Airy served as the smithing and shoemaking center of Richmond County and the surrounding region. The younger Tayloe helped promote the growth of towns in Virginia. He served as a trustee for and owned lots in numerous towns, including Williamsburg, Fredericksburg, and Dumfries. During his lifetime, entrepreneurialism characterized the wealthiest planter-businessmen and expanded the possible universe of economic activities in which they might engage. Furthermore, by the middle of the eighteenth century, the existence of large slave populations not only made diversification possible but also necessitated such an approach. As Tayloe and others of his generation shifted their acreage from tobacco to wheat and other grains, slaves had more free time on their hands. Thus, planters found that not only could they use their slaves in a variety of enterprises in addition to agriculture, but that it was in their own best interest to do so.

New activities, including investments in city lots, horses, banks, internal improvements, transportation lines, and hotels and taverns, characterized the financial strategy of John Tayloe III (1771-1828). For Tayloe and many of his contemporaries, these business activities were more important than agriculture. The third Tayloe enlarged his landed estate, advantageously cultivated a variety of grains, and expanded profitable plantation industries such as fishing, smithing, shoemaking, and clothmaking. Like his grandfather, however, John Tayloe III assumed control of his estate in the midst of an unstable and unpredictable economy, in this case during the years after the American Revolution. Tayloe's survival and success therefore mandated that he make a number of profound adjustments to the estate he inherited. By the 1790s the family ironworks were no longer profitable, mostly because of a lack of convenient natural resources. Tayloe began slowly to disassemble the core of his father's enterprises. He quickly found a new means to remain involved with the lucrative iron industry, however, and purchased a forge and furnace in western Virginia. Still, his central interests lay in the new opportunities of the new nation. Upon his return from completing his education in England, John Tayloe III began living half of every year in the city--first in Annapolis, then in the new federal city of Washington. As soon as his sons reached their majority, he began turning over management responsibilities to them, keeping a share of the profits for himself. From his city house, Tayloe invested in banks and served on their boards, operated two lucrative stage lines, speculated in and rented city properties, owned hotels and taverns, and purchased stock in new companies. Tayloe's strength was his ability to recognize changing situations and new opportunities. Thus, he completed the shift initiated by his father from tobacco to grain on his plantations, cut his losses at one

depleted ironworks in order to run another, and turned to new types of businesses and investments symbolic of a new place and time: early national Washington.³⁰ John Tayloe III represents a final shift in planter-class identity. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the integrated multiple roles planter-businessmen formerly played often evolved into specialization. Increasingly, planters returned to an agricultural focus, while businessmen turned their attention to a variety of urban business and industrial endeavors.

The Tayloes' entrepreneurialism in all three generations was made possible by the labor of slaves. John Tayloe II owned approximately 500 slaves, while his son John Tayloe III owned more than 700 by the 1820s. The Tayloe slaves did much more than tend fields and keep house. They served as shoemakers, blacksmiths, joiners, carpenters, masons, sailors, spinners, weavers, colliers, and millers, among other skilled occupations. Under the third Tayloe's management, as many as 250 slaves--or one third of his entire slave population--were skilled or semi-skilled workers who rarely performed field work. Richard Dunn, historian of the antebellum Tayloe slaves, found that more slaves at Mount Airy performed regular skilled work than on a typical Jamaican sugar plantation

³⁰Thomas Doerflinger has suggested that entrepreneurialism was the biggest difference between the North and South during the early national period. He insisted the difference between northern commercial leaders and southern planters was that planters lacked entrepreneurial qualities such as drive, flexibility, tolerance for risk, quest for new markets, and innovativeness. He continued, "Decade after decade of sowing and reaping had fixed blinders on the southern businessman. Having so long left marketing, finance, shipping, and manufacturing primarily to European and Yankee capitalists, the planter was not readily disposed to enter these fields when the profitability of agriculture waned." The activities of all three Tayloes, but especially John III, disprove his assumptions regarding early planter commercial endeavors as well as planters' adaptability in the face of new economic circumstances. See Doerflinger, A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise, 346-347, 355.

which included its own mill, boiling house, curing house, and distillery.³¹ While all three Tayloe patriarchs usually relied on white overseers and sometimes on white craftsmen to supervise and train their slaves, they valued and respected the slaves' skills and knowledge.

On an individual basis, the Tayloes' far-reaching business activities provided many slaves with greater levels of autonomy, skill, status, and higher standards of living. The more skills a slave possessed, the more likely he or she was to work unsupervised, receive pay for overwork, travel alone, have requests of various sorts approved, receive extra rations or clothing, or have the privilege of passing down trade skills and higher status to his or her children. However, on the community level, the nature of the Tayloes' empire daily challenged the ability of slaves to form and maintain cohesive families and communities. Mt. Airy, the Tayloe's dwelling plantation, actually consisted of nine interdependent tracts covering thirty miles in three Virginia counties situated on both sides of the Rappahannock River. Slave individuals and sometimes whole families were moved from one plantation to another as needed. The Tayloes also owned several more distant plantations, such as the Neabsco Ironworks in northern Virginia, the Cloverdale Furnace in western Virginia, and the iron ore banks and other farms in Maryland, to which they often sent slaves for specific jobs or permanent reassignment. Both John Tayloe II and his son lived part of every year away from Mount Airy--the elder John in Williamsburg, the younger John in Annapolis and Washington City--which meant that

³¹Richard Dunn, "A Tale of Two Plantations: Slave Life at Mesopotamia in Jamaica and Mount Airy in Virginia, 1799-1828," *WMQ* 3d ser., 36 (January 1977), 52. Dunn further noted that the Mount Airy proportion of 34% skilled slaves versus Mesopotamia's 21% was also larger than the average worked out by Fogel and Engerman (26.3%) in *Time on the Cross* and by Herbert Gutman (15% or lower) in "The World Two Cliometricians Made," 52n24, for the antebellum South.

some of their slaves made that yearly journey as well. The Tayloe slaves, then, were accustomed to a certain amount of disruption in their living arrangements, and constantly were forced to adjust and adapt to changing situations and circumstances in order to survive.

The questions I will address include: How did the Tayloes and other planter-businessmen go about doing their business? What sort of businessmen were they? What opportunities and enterprises did the Tayloes pursue and why? How extensive were their various entrepreneurial activities relative to tobacco cultivation? What encouraged entrepreneurialism among Chesapeake planters in general and the Tayloes in particular? What role did white agents, overseers, and managers play in the maintenance and success of such a widespread empire? Similarly, what role did the Tayloes' slaves play in contributing the labor, skill, and knowledge necessary to operate the various industries? What was the impact of the estate's geographical diversity on the slave community?

The Tayloes' activities over three generations prove that their part of the South certainly possessed a business culture and valued creative enterprise. Rural industry and diversified enterprise characterized the economic activity of the upper echelons in early Virginia and were central to Virginia's society and economy. Robert "King" Carter lamented as early as 1728 that he had "too many irons in the fire" to get involved in the first John Tayloe's ironworks, but exclaimed that he was "glad to find so many considerable gentlemen engag'd in designs" of industry and felt the next generation would benefit greatly.³² Planters, many of whom served advantageously as burgesses,

³²Robert Carter to Colo. John Tayloe I, January 29, 1728/9, Robert Carter Letterbook, 1728-1730, Virginia Historical Society.

councilmen, or in other important political offices, had the power, influence, money, knowledge, and desire to diversify their interests. Planters' "traditional" holdings in land and slaves made their entrepreneurial efforts possible and successful financially. Land and slaves could be used as capital or as security with which to obtain credit, and slaves almost always provided the skills and labor central to starting and maintaining enterprises such as ironworks or mills. Planters also exercised political power, both formally and informally, that enabled them to influence law, policy, and other decisions to their own advantage.³³ For example, the first and second Tayloes both used their membership on the Colonial Council to successfully petition for relief from port duties on imported iron ore.³⁴ This dispensation was critical to the success and viability of their ironworks and represents the way all planter-businessmen could wield their political influence in their own economic interest. Thus, the Tayloe family demonstrates that political, economic, and social power together made possible planters' entrepreneurial efforts in early Virginia.

³³Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790 (New York, 1982), 133; Michael Zuckerman, "Fate, Flux, and Good Fellowship: An Early Virginia Design for the Dilemma of American Business," in Harold Issadore Sharlin, ed., Business and its Environment: Essays for Thomas C. Cochran (Westport, C.T., 1983), 166; James B. Slaughter, Settlers, Southerners, Americans: The History of Essex County, Virginia, 1608-1984 (Salem, W.V., 1985), 16. Slaughter found, for example, that county office holders in Essex received 56% of the 56,791 acres awarded as land patents, 1692-1705; and Rudolf Braun, "The Rise of a Rural Class of Entrepreneurs," Journal of World History 10 (1967), 554.

³⁴H.R. McIlwaine, ed., Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (Richmond, 1925), 4: 433; William P. Palmer, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts (New York, 1968), 38: 387.

A map of the United Kingdom showing county boundaries and names. A scale bar at the top right indicates 0 to 50 miles. The map includes labels for major cities like London, Manchester, and Liverpool, and bodies of water like the Atlantic Ocean and the English Channel.

Map of Virginia, circa 1830

CHAPTER I

IRONS IN THE FIRE: JOHN TAYLOE I, FOUNDER AND INNOVATOR

John Tayloe was born into a wealthy Virginia family in 1687 and entered adulthood during the first decade of the eighteenth century. His formative years, therefore, occurred in the midst of a massive recession in Virginia's tobacco economy. Beginning around 1680 and continuing through approximately 1720, tobacco overproduction and the disruption of wars resulted in some of the lowest tobacco prices the Virginia colonists had yet experienced.¹ One of the most important results of this prolonged economic stagnation was that tobacco planters on all rungs of the social ladder found the perfect motivation to begin pursuing more diversified economic activities. A whole generation of planters realized that they could not depend on tobacco alone to provide for their long-term social and economic needs. Furthermore, low returns on tobacco meant that planters had less money with which to purchase whatever subsistence or luxury goods they regularly required. The leadership of the colony had encouraged

¹Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "Economic Diversification and Labor Organization in the Chesapeake, 1650-1820," in Stephen Innes, ed., Work and Labor in Early America (Chapel Hill, 1988), 145; Richard B. Sheridan, "The Domestic Economy," in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds., Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era (Baltimore, 1984), 45; Russell R. Menard, "The Tobacco Industry in the Chesapeake Colonies, 1617-1730: An Interpretation," Research in Economic History 5 (1980), 109-177; and P. M. G. Harris, "Economic Growth and Demographic Perspective: The Example of the Chesapeake, 1607-1775," in Lois Green Carr: The Chesapeake and Beyond—A Celebration (Crownsville, Md., 1992), 61-73.

diversification since the first decades of settlement.² However, it was not until the first decades of the eighteenth century that planters actively began to invest in, establish, and operate alternative economic activities in order to supply themselves with less expensive locally produced consumer goods and establish a buffer against the worst fluctuations of the tobacco market.³

Planters began to substitute grains and other crops for tobacco, and pursued a variety of both simple and complex industrial activities such as shoemaking, coopering, milling, clothmaking, shipbuilding, and ironmaking. The severity of the ongoing tobacco recession created a permanent place in Virginia's economy for these alternative activities and businesses. While he was governor, Alexander Spotswood reported to the British Council of Trade in 1710 that diversification and industry "is now become so universal that even in one of the best countys for tobacco, I'm credibly informed there had been made this last year above 40,000 yards of divers sorts of Woolen, Cotton, and Linnen

²For an idea of the types of legislation colonial leaders passed to encourage diversification see William Waller Hening, ed., The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619 (hereafter Hening's *Statutes*) (Charlottesville, 1969), 1: 218, 1: 469-470, 2: 120-121, 2: 241-242, 2: 306-307, 2: 503-507, 4: 96-97, 6: 144-146 (flax, hemp, wheat, silk, tar); 2: 38, 2: 122-123, 2: 186 (salt); 2:122-123, 2: 178 (shipbuilding), 2:123 (tanhouses); 5: 362-363 (salt petre); 2: 260-261, 3: 110, 3: 401-404 (mills). See Warren Billings, "Sir William Berkeley and the Diversification of the Virginia Economy," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (hereafter *VMHB*) 104 (4) (August 1996), 433-454, for a discussion of diversification attempts during the seventeenth century.

³Billings, "Sir William Berkeley and the Diversification of the Virginia Economy," 433-454; Christine Daniels, "Gresham's Laws: Labor Management on an Early-Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Plantation," *Journal of Southern History* (hereafter *JSH*) 62 (May 1996), 208-209; Richard L. Bushman, "Markets and Composite Farms in Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly* (hereafter *WMQ*) 3d ser., 55 (3) (July 1998), 356; James B. Slaughter, *Settlers, Southerners, Americans: The History of Essex County, Virginia, 1608-1984* (Salem, W.V., 1985), 14; Menard, "The Tobacco Industry in the Chesapeake Colonies," 114, 125-126; Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill, 1986), 78; John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill, 1985), 119; Aubrey C. Land, *Bases of the Plantation Society* (Columbia, S.C., 1969), 99, 101; Gregory Stiverson, "'Gentlemen of Industry, Skill, and Application': Plantation Management in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," (Williamsburg, VA, 1975), 97-98; Carville V. Earle, *The Evolution of a Tidewater Settlement System: All Hallow's Parish, Maryland, 1650-1783* (Chicago, 1975), 131-132.

Cloth, and other countys where tobacco is less valuable have no doubt advanced their manufactures proportionately.”⁴ Diversification was more than a temporary reaction by planters to downturns in the market; it was a long-term trend that shaped local exchange, social interaction, planters’ labor requirements, the nature of servants’ and slaves’ work, and planter class identity.⁵ The wealthiest planters possessed the greatest resources in land and slaves and thus moved earliest and most consistently into diversification. Many of these planters had always looked for new and improved ways of making money; as Joyce Chaplin described them, such planters were innovators, not responders.⁶ These men were not just planters, they were planter-businessmen with a two-fold commitment to both agriculture and a variety of non-agricultural business enterprises. Planters had a variety of interests which competed with planting and they did not see these diversified pursuits as mutually exclusive. Beginning during the economic recession of 1680-1720 and continuing through the eighteenth century, planters regularly attempted to find new business activities and investments to battle diminishing tobacco returns.⁷ The patriarchs of the Tayloe family, John I (1687-1747), John II (1721-1779), and John III (1771-1828),

⁴Alexander Spotswood, Governor of the Colony of Virginia, to the British Council of Trade, March 20, 1710, in Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, ed., Plantation and Frontier Documents, 1649-1863, Illustrative of Industrial History in the Colonial and Antebellum South (Cleveland, 1909), 186-188.

⁵Carr and Walsh, “Economic Diversification and Labor Organization,” 145-146, 163; Sheridan, “The Domestic Economy,” 46-47; Land, Bases of the Plantation Society, 101, 125; Paul G. E. Clemens, “The Operation of an Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Tobacco Plantation,” Agricultural History 44 (July 1975), 518, 521-522; McCusker and Menard, The Economy of British America, 127; and Jean B. Russo, “A Model Planter: Edward Lloyd IV of Maryland, 1770-1796,” WMQ 3d ser., 49 (January 1992), 62.

⁶Joyce E. Chaplin, An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815 (Chapel Hill, 1993), 187; see also, Carr and Walsh, “Economic Diversification and Labor Organization,” 146; Clemens, “The Operation of an Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Tobacco Plantation,” 525.

⁷Lorena S. Walsh, “Plantation Management in the Chesapeake,” Journal of Economic History 49 (1989), 394.

were all planter-businessmen. John Tayloe I was the founder of the family fortune who created the legacy of innovation, risk-taking, and entrepreneurialism and bequeathed it to his descendants.

William Tayloe, father of the first John, was a wealthy and important planter in his own right. William was born in London in 1645 and immigrated to Virginia at an unknown date, but no later than the 1680s. In 1685, William married Anne Corbin, daughter of Henry Corbin, a wealthy Middlesex County planter and founder of another family of prominent planter-businessmen.⁸ Various other members of the Tayloe family of London were involved in merchant activities, among them Robert Tayloe, who captained a ship engaged in the trans-Atlantic trade. London provided a liberating environment that fostered innovation and entrepreneurial activity which may have contributed to growth of an entrepreneurial spirit among Virginia's planters. Many first-generation Virginians were from or spent considerable time in London before emigrating.⁹

William and Anne Tayloe made their home in the part of old Rappahannock County that became Richmond County, in Virginia's Northern Neck. On a branch of the Rappahannock River, William built a dwelling and plantation which later became known as Old House. William at least partially financed his Richmond County estate from sales of lands he inherited from his uncle, also named William Tayloe, who lived in York County and died in 1655. In 1693, the younger Tayloe sold Lewis Burwell 1,200 acres of

⁸W. Randolph Tayloe, The Tayloes of Virginia and Allied Families (Berryville, Va., 1963), 1.

⁹Martin H. Quitt, "Immigrant Origins of the Virginia Gentry: A Study of Cultural Transmission and Innovation," WMQ 3d ser., 45 (4) (October 1988), 634-635.

land on the York River between King's and Queen's Creeks which had belonged to his uncle.¹⁰ His uncle's bequest likely helped the younger William establish himself as an important planter and political leader in Richmond County.

When William died in 1710, his estate in Richmond and Essex Counties totaled over 3,000 acres worked by 21 slaves.¹¹ He served consecutively as a member of the Council and House of Burgesses, and also as sheriff and as a colonel in the county militia. In 1688, Tayloe outfitted two militia troops for the county and was paid 15,000 pounds of tobacco in return. In 1704, he "rendered [services] subduing local Indians on behalf of the county and Her Majesty," and opened an impromptu prison at his plantation for "guarding Indian prisoners" captured while "Fetch[ing] downe the rest of the Indians."¹² Like other Virginians, William Tayloe grew tobacco and consigned it to British merchants as his main means of income. However, Tayloe was likely a merchant in his own right. When he died in 1710, his inventory included such great quantities of a number of items listed as "New Goods" that they were possibly intended for sale. These included "128 1/4 yds of Oxenbriggs [Oznaburg]," "46 yds of Collard Lining," 3 "feltt hatts," "17 yds of Scotch Bagging," "126 lbs of Nails," "72 lbs of Rope," and "7600 foot poplar planke."¹³ Tayloe had on hand "4 Spinning Wheels," "2 p[air] of wool Cardes,"

¹⁰November 23, 1693, York County Deed Books.

¹¹Essex County Deed Book, 6: 181, 14: 395-403; Plat of John Tayloe's Property in Richmond County, April 1774, Library of Virginia (hereafter LVA); William Tayloe Inventory, Richmond County Will Book, 1709-1714, 42-44.

¹²Quotes from William Tayloe Account of Expenses in Beverley Fleet, comp., ed., Virginia Colonial Abstracts (hereafter VCA) (Richmond, 19--), 17: 29-32; W. Noel Sainsburg, ed., Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies (hereafter CSP) (Vaduz, 1964), 2:149, 15:454, 18:728-729; 19:492; Old Rappahannock County Order Book, 2: 144.

¹³William Tayloe Inventory.

and “1 parcell of Coopers tooles” indicating that his slaves engaged in some small-scale craft and manufacturing activity as well.¹⁴ Altogether, these activities made William Tayloe a wealthy man and allowed him to live in comfort. His plantation house was adorned with “Curtaines” and “fifty five pictures and mapps great and small,” and he had a library stocked with “45 bookes.” The house likely had three or four bedrooms, which would have been plenty of room to accommodate himself, his wife, and his three children. He furnished his dining room and parlor with “Six new Caine Chairs,” “five old Leather Chaires,” “An Oval table,” a “Couch,” and a variety of trunks, chests, stools, tables, and candlesticks. He dressed in suits, cloaks, and wigs. His personal effects, including his slaves, were worth more than £700.¹⁵

John Tayloe I was accustomed to living in such an environment, and recognized that he would need to further his father’s political, social, and economic achievements in order to weather the troubled economy that he confronted upon reaching adulthood. In 1713, he married the widow Elizabeth Gwynn Lyde. Afterwards, Tayloe found himself in a protracted court battle over Elizabeth’s deceased husband’s estate with the Lyde family of Bristol, who also felt themselves to be the true heirs of Stephen Lyde’s Virginia estate. Tayloe eventually won several judgments against the administrators of the Lyde estate who had withheld Elizabeth’s inheritance. Altogether, Tayloe received from the Lyde estate 1,000 acres in Essex County--on which he established Gwinfield Plantation--10

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

FIGURE 2



John Tayloe I (1687-1747)
Original at Smithsonian Institution

slaves, £200 sterling, and 264 pounds of tobacco.¹⁶ This new marriage did more than provide Tayloe with additional land, slaves, and cash; it also enabled Tayloe to establish new relationships with the Bristol merchant community that would become valuable in future entrepreneurial activities.

As Tayloe began his new family, he became more involved with politics in Richmond County. He was appointed to a succession of offices: sheriff in 1713; storehouse agent, tobacco inspector, and county justice in 1714; and North Farnham Parish churchwarden in 1725.¹⁷ In 1728, Robert Carter of Corotoman presented Tayloe with a militia post. "I sent you your own Commd and a Maj. Commd for Moore Fantleroy which you Seem to think most proper . . . I do not care to fill them up [lower-ranked officer positions] till I have your Assistance and recommendation."¹⁸ By the 1730s, one of the most lucrative colonial positions was offered to Tayloe--a council seat. The Colonial Council of Virginia controlled the land grant process, helped set colonial policy, and served as an appeals court. In December of 1731, Tayloe was nominated to fill a vacancy, and shortly thereafter accepted a seat that he held almost until his death in 1747. Tayloe quickly began to reap the benefits of his new position. In 1734, he received a grant from the Council for 60,000 acres in partnership with Thomas Lee and William

¹⁶State of ye Case inter Tayloe & the Lydes of Bristoll, Tayloe Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society (hereafter VHS), Reel 5, Frames 11-18. A large part of the Tayloe Family Papers at the VHS have been microfilmed as part of the Records of Ante-Bellum Southern Plantations, Series M, Part 1: The Tayloe Family. These papers will hereafter be expressed as TFP, Reel: Frame, to distinguish them from Tayloe family collections that are not part of the microfilm collection located at the VHS and other repositories. Essex County Deed Book, 14: 395-403; Richmond County Order Book, 6: 135, 157.

¹⁷Richmond County Order Book, 6: 29, 178, 258-259, 228, 470; 7: 78; 8: 234, 9: 59, 151; Richmond County Deed Book 6: 141; 7: 18-19; 8: 61-63, 136; TFP, 5: 96-97.

¹⁸Robert Carter, Corotom. to Coll. Tayloe, November 20, 1778, Robert Carter Letterbook, VHS.

Beverly. The land was located on the Shenandoah River and had to be settled by 60 families within two years. While Tayloe ultimately withdrew from this speculative activity, it is representative of the type of power and opportunity his newfound political and social standing brought him.¹⁹ Wealthy planters could use the power and resources available to them through positions such as Council seats to secure their status as planter-businessmen. For example, when Tayloe founded an ironworks during the 1730s, he petitioned the Council successfully for relief from port duties on iron ore imported from Maryland. Without the approval of his colleagues on the Council, his foray into ironmaking would have failed, as no extensive iron mines existed on his lands.²⁰

Emulating his father's example, John Tayloe I first engaged in merchant activities to augment his income from tobacco. In 1712, he invested in an ordinary (tavern) which was run by Richard Hill at Richmond Courthouse.²¹ Between at least 1717 and 1724, Tayloe worked as a local agent for the Bristol merchants he met through the dispute over the Lyde estate. Tayloe annually imported merchandise from Bristol intended for sale in the local marketplace. His neighbors could buy items such as books, cloth, thread, buttons, suits, gloves, hats, stockings, shoes, hair pins, nails, rugs, salt, utensils, dishes,

¹⁹CSP, 38: 387; "The Colonial Council of Virginia," *WMQ*, 1st ser., 3 (1) (July 1894), 67, this article mistakenly identifies 1734 instead of 1732 as Tayloe's first year on the Council; H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Executive Journals of the Council of Virginia* (hereafter *Executive Journals*) (Richmond, 1925), 4: 336, 375; Charles Kemper, ed., "The Early Westward Movement of Virginia, 1722-1734, as Shown by the Proceedings of the Colonial Council," *VMHB* 13 (4) (April 1906), 360. See Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (New York, 1982), 133-135, for a good discussion of the relationship between power and access to wealth in early Virginia; Rudolf Braun, "The Rise of a Rural Class of Entrepreneurs," *Journal of World History* 10 (1967), 554.

²⁰*Executive Journals*, 4: 433; William P. Palmer, ed., *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts* (hereafter *CVSP*) (New York, 1968), 38: 387. See also Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 133-135.

²¹Richmond County Deed Book, 6: 52.

tools, paper, furniture, pipes, and a variety of other goods. Tools and clothing constituted the biggest part of Tayloe's inventory. Indicative of the growing trend toward diversification and home production, Tayloe always had on hand a full array of carpenter's, shoemaker's, cooper's, and general agricultural tool sets. He also carried some clothes for white men, women, and children, as well as for "Negros."²² Tayloe's merchant activities were not confined to his Northern Neck neighborhood. He also conducted business in Yorktown, Virginia's most important port during the first half of the eighteenth century, on behalf of his Bristol merchant contacts. In 1723, in partnership with Augustine Moore, Tayloe jointly sold "in York" a shipment of goods sent by Isaac Hobhouse of Bristol. During the 1730s, Tayloe purchased two tracts of land in York County totaling over 300 acres. Tayloe felt that the York River area provided one of the most lucrative markets in Virginia since there was the "most money Stirling in that river."²³

Part of Tayloe's merchant activities included participation in the slave trade. During the first decades of the eighteenth century, slave ships regularly stopped at the dwelling plantations of the local agents of English merchants to dispose of their slave cargoes. Other prominent Virginians such as Robert "King" Carter and George Braxton joined Tayloe in this trade. The Rappahannock River was one important landing place for slaves during the first half of the eighteenth century, as there were few if any landings on the Potomac River during that time. Between 1727 and 1769, slave traders imported

²²Stephen Loyde and John Tayloe Account Book, 1708-1778, TFP, 2: 65-66, 79, 91-92, 100-101, 114.

²³Jno. Tayloe to Isaac Hobhouse, May 29, 1723, Hobhouse & Company Papers, Mss. 10, No. 91, VHS; TFP, 5: 62-63, 65.

over 6,000 slaves into the Northern Neck, and 83% of these entered the region through Rappahannock River landings.²⁴ While Tayloe offered slaves for sale in addition to other goods, he used these slave-trading activities to construct his own slave labor pool as well. For instance, in 1717, he purchased for his own use an African man, woman, and five-year-old boy for a total of £80.²⁵

During the 1720s and 1730s, Tayloe extended his business activities into milling. In August of 1724, he petitioned the Richmond County court to allow him to buy one acre of land from a Mr. Carey on the fork of the Shorts and Bridge Quarter Swamps in order “to erect a Grist Water Mill.” His colleagues on the court approved his petition, and in September Tayloe paid Carey 5 shillings sterling for the property.²⁶ Milling was a complex and significant agricultural and industrial activity. Historians have characterized colonial milling as the basis of early industrialization in America. Water mills involved some of the most sophisticated technology of the period, required entrepreneurial and technical talent, and provided important services for surrounding communities.²⁷ As

²⁴Donald Sweig, “Northern Virginia Slavery: A Statistical and Demographic Investigation,” unpublished dissertation, The College of William and Mary, 1982, 21-23; Gerald W. Mullin, Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia (London, 1972), 14-15.

²⁵Stephen Lyde and John Tayloe Account Book, TFP, 2: 67.

²⁶VCA, 17: 125. Both Virginia and Maryland allowed for the redistribution (not in all cases compensated) of sites appropriate for building water mills as a means of encouraging their construction. The earliest act in Virginia occurred in September of 1667, and stated that anyone who was willing to build a mill but did not have access to the appropriate land could get the land of someone who owned such land condemned if they were not interested in building a mill themselves. Maryland modeled its 1669 act on the Virginia law, but furthered the privileges millbuilders received by granting ten acres instead of only one. Later acts in both colonies provided means through which to obtain land on the opposite side of the river from the mill site as well. Hening’s Statutes, 2: 260-261, 3: 110, 3: 401-404, 5: 359-362, 6: 55-60; John F. Hart, “The Maryland Mill Act, 1669-1766: Economic Policy and Confiscatory Redistribution of Private Property,” American Journal of Legal History 39 (January 1995), 1, 2, 7.

²⁷McCusker and Menard, The Economy of British America, 323-325; Hart, “The Maryland Mill Act,” 7; Thomas Berry, “The Rise of Flour Milling in Richmond,” VMHB 18 (October 1970), 390.

Tayloe expanded his landholdings in Richmond County, he purchased other mills to service the various parts of his estate. In 1739, Lindsay Opie sold Tayloe “all that old Water grist Mill situate on Clark’s Run in Richmond County.” A year later, Tayloe purchased the Totuskey Mill as part of a tract containing 368.5 acres from Willoughby Newton. The latter mill he gave to John Smith in exchange for release from a £400 debt. At some point, Tayloe acquired yet another grist mill on two acres, which he sold to Benjamin Rust in 1744.²⁸ The details regarding Tayloe’s mill and milling business are not known. However, the location of Tayloe’s 1724 mill remained the family’s main mill seat for the next hundred years.²⁹

As Tayloe amassed more income and capital resources from his various activities, he enlarged his landed estate. Some of the property additions Tayloe intended for the use of his plantations, while others were strictly speculative endeavors. Tayloe started with an inherited estate in two counties consisting of approximately 3,000 acres. Upon his marriage, Tayloe acquired an additional 1,000 acres. As early as 1711, he began purchasing lands that adjoined tracts he already owned. Between 1711 and 1726, Tayloe made small purchases and even traded lands in order to centralize his holdings around his dwelling plantation south of the Rappahannock and Herring Creeks. During the 1730s, he purchased approximately 700 additional acres. In Essex County, Tayloe expanded

²⁸Richmond County Deed Book, 9: 519-520, 10: 235-236; John Tayloe Bonds, TFP, 5: 65-66.

²⁹The remains of the Tayloe mill still stand about a mile from the family’s home in Richmond County. Although the mill is steadily collapsing, its structure and water wheel are still identifiable. The mill is a two-story and loft structure built of stone and wood situated on the edge of a mill pond and swamp.

Gwinfield Plantation, located almost directly opposite his Richmond County lands on the Rappahannock River, adding almost 1,800 acres between 1724 and 1739.³⁰

Throughout the 1720s and 1730s, Tayloe acquired lands more distant from his home. Some of these lands were part of two iron manufacturing companies Tayloe operated. Throughout the 1720s, Tayloe purchased land in King George County on behalf of himself and also the Bristol Iron Works, an enterprise founded and financed by the same Bristol merchants with whom Tayloe regularly conducted business. Tayloe worked at first as the merchants' agent and manager of the works, and later became a full partner with a large interest in the company.³¹ During the 1730s, as operations at Bristol became less productive, Tayloe began concentrating on his own iron company. By 1737, when the Neabsco Ironworks entered production, Tayloe had accumulated over 9,000 acres in Prince William County in northern Virginia.³² As the company grew, he added another 3,000 acres in the part of Prince William County that later became Loudoun County. These lands came to be known as the Kittockton (or Ketocktan) tract.³³

These large purchases drew Tayloe into further land speculation. In 1734, Tayloe petitioned for 60,000 acres west of the Shenandoah River in partnership with Thomas Lee and William Beverly. In order to maintain possession of the land, the trio had to settle a

³⁰Richmond County Deed Book, 6: 21-24; 7: 126, 127, 136-139; 8: 284, 335, 681; 9: 442-444, 475-478, 487-488, 509-511, 519-520; 10: 235-236; Essex County Deed Book, 17: 396-398, 18: 191-192, 21: 321, 382, 430; TFP, 5: 6-7, 65-66, 72-75, 76, 79-83.

³¹King George County Deed Book, 1: 51-52; Essex County Deed Book, 17: 174; Richmond County Deed Book, 8: 489-491.

³²Stafford County Deeds, TFP, 5: 39, 41; Prince William County Deed Book, A, 153, 387; B: 4-7, 31, 34, 245, 439; D: 364; E: 10; See also Deeds, TFP, 5: 53, 602, 604.

³³Peggy Joyner Shomo, comp., Abstracts of Virginia's Northern Neck Warrants & Surveys, 1710-1780 (hereafter Northern Neck Warrants) (Portsmouth, Va., 1986), 129.

minimum of one family for every thousand acres within two years. By 1736, they had recruited 67 families, but since the surveyor of the grant had included an extra 18,000 acres, they still had to recruit an additional eleven families within two months. At that point, Tayloe and Lee withdrew from the deal, which was apparently Beverly's preference anyway.³⁴ Throughout the period, those wishing to patent large grants, or any grant over 400 acres, required the approval of the Council and Governor. This process was intended to prevent gross overspeculation.³⁵ However, Tayloe's land purchasing history indicates both that he did indeed purchase land far above what he could use and that the approval process was merely a technicality for those in positions of power. In addition to Tayloe's foray into large-scale speculation with Lee and Beverly, which did come under the close scrutiny of the Council, Tayloe repeatedly purchased tracts far in excess of 400 acres without inviting comment. At least three times he purchased lands including between 400 and 1,000 acres, while he made six purchases of 1,000 or more acres.³⁶ In so doing, Tayloe participated in a larger trend of land speculation which had long characterized Virginia but which burgeoned during the first half of the eighteenth century. Speculators were attracted especially to the Potomac River Valley (Fairfax and Loudoun Counties), as European settlement was spreading quickly past the Blue Ridge.³⁷

³⁴Executive Journals, 4: 336, 375.

³⁵See Sarah S. Hughes, Surveyors and Statesmen: Land Measuring in Colonial Virginia (Richmond, 1979) for a detailed analysis of land patenting regulations and procedures in early Virginia.

³⁶Richmond County Deed Book, 9: 475 (586 acres); Essex County Deed Book, 181: 191-192 (500 acres); Prince William County Deed Book, A: 153 (2,367 acres), 387 (1,214 acres); B: 4-7 (4,700 acres); TFP, 5: 39, 41 (1,000 acres each); Northern Neck Warrants, 129 (3,242 acres).

³⁷Frances C. Robb, "Industry in the Potomac River Valley, 1760-1780," unpublished dissertation, West Virginia University, 1991, 23.

Tayloe found a way to put at least some of his underutilized and unimproved lands to good use. Beginning in 1713, he began leasing various tracts to tenants for an annual rent. John Pound had rented from Tayloe a 600-acre tract in Richmond County for at least three years when he purchased it in 1716.³⁸ In 1724, Tayloe purchased 1,000 acres in Essex County adjoining his Gwinfield Plantation lands. In April of the same year, he rented 399 acres of those new lands to a tenant for sixpence sterling per year.³⁹ In 1731, Tayloe rented 200 acres, probably in Prince William County, to John Coffey for an unknown rent. When Tayloe purchased 337.5 acres from Scarlet Hancock in King George County in 1736, Hancock required and Tayloe agreed that "the Lease made [previously by Hancock] to John Gilbert for his & his wifes life Reserving no rent, & to William Fickling for fourteen years paying rent are to have their full effect."⁴⁰ Although most of the terms of these leases have not survived, they were likely developmental or life leases, the two most popular forms of leasing agreements. Landlords offered developmental leases for low or even no rent in return for improvements to the properties made by the tenants, including clearing the land and erecting buildings. More common were life leases, such as John Gilbert likely enjoyed, wherein a landlord would let a tract of land for the lifetime of the longest-living resident. Such leases encouraged tenants to make improvements and maintain the land's natural resources, as they were dependent on, and benefited from, those resources for their lifetime.⁴¹

³⁸Richmond County Deed Book, 7: 127.

³⁹TFP, 5: 45.

⁴⁰TFP, 5: 602; King George County Deed Book, 2: 17-19.

⁴¹Lorena S. Walsh, "Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder: Estate Management and Tenant Fortunes in Southern Maryland, 1640-1820," Agricultural History 59 (1985), 375 n. 9, 376.

As Tayloe's estate expanded and became more complex, he required more assistance and labor in order to manage it efficiently. He recognized this fact as early as 1716, when he wrote to his Bristol contacts requesting "that you woud p[ro]cure me some male Ser[van]t[s] if they woud Indent for 5: 6: or 7 years a ps [piece] tis a great advantage in the Sale . . . I pray you to p[ro]cure me a Sober capeable man to write & do buisnes for me, & if an honest fellow yt understands his Plow & his Scythe should fall in ur [your] way he woud be very Serviceable to me."⁴² Tayloe was looking for someone who could serve as more than just an agricultural overseer for him. Managers or agents, as Tayloe desired, conducted business for their employers on an estate-wide level. William Pierce may have been one such man that Tayloe hired "to write & do buisnes" for him, as Tayloe instructed his son in his will to take special care of him: "As William Pierce . . . has lived some time with me I desire my son to Employ the said Pierce as long as he chooses to stay in his service and Give him such wages as my said Son shall think reasonable."⁴³ Planters developed close relationships with these managers because they depended upon them to represent their interests in any business matter that might arise. Tayloe also staffed his home estate with over 70 slaves worth more than £2320, and maintained slave quarters on his estates in Essex, Stafford, King George, and Prince William Counties containing 257 slaves valued at over £5900.⁴⁴ Thus Tayloe's entrepreneurial interests in combination with his agricultural activities enabled him to

⁴²Stephen Loyde and John Tayloe Account Book, TFP, 2: 155.

⁴³Will of John Tayloe I, 1747, TFP, 5: 103-112.

⁴⁴John Tayloe, Room by Room Inventory of Mt. Airy, November 1747, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (hereafter CWF); John Tayloe Estate Inventory, November 2, 1747, Richmond County Will Book 5, 547-553.

amass quickly all the trappings of a great Virginia planter--land, slaves, and political position.

Tayloe's riskiest yet most lucrative business was ironmaking. A number of the merchants with whom Tayloe regularly conducted business were involved in various industrial activities. Isaac Hobhouse of Bristol was a partner in the Joseph Percivall & Copper Company and also had shares in a sugar refinery at Redcliffe, Bristol. Lyonel Lyde, relative of Elizabeth Tayloe's deceased husband Stephen Lyde, was a Virginia merchant and master of the Society of Merchant Venturers.⁴⁵ Some of these merchants began to look for industrial opportunities in Virginia as well, and by 1720, began developing a plan to establish an ironworks. John King, Jeremy Innys, John Lewis, Samuel Jacob, Lyonel Lyde, Walter King, John Templeman, and Samuel Dyke served as the core group of Virginia and Bristol investors who established the Bristol Ironworks in early 1721. The merchant-investors' other interests prevented them from overseeing the day-to-day operations of the works. Thus, they appointed several long-time business associates, including John Tayloe, John Lomax, and Philip Elway, as partners and managers of the ironworks. Tayloe seems to have performed the lion's share of the managerial duties, as by 1724 the merchants appointed him sole "Principal agent overseer and Director of the said Iron works." His duties included supervising workers and production, purchasing and selling tracts of land, and acquiring the necessary raw materials, including iron ore and wood for charcoal.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Isaac Hobhouse & Company Papers.

⁴⁶King George County Deed Book, 1: 51-52; Essex County Deed Book, 17: 174. See also G. McClaren Brydon, "The Bristol Iron Works in King George County," VMHB 42 (2) (April 1934), 97-102; Edward

Tayloe and the Bristol merchants were not alone in realizing the lucrative opportunities available in the iron industry. During the seventeenth century, England had limited colonial iron production to prevent competition with home-country furnaces.⁴⁷ By the 1710s, England was importing more iron from Sweden than it was producing itself. When King George I restricted the Swedish trade with an embargo in 1717, England looked to the colonies to fill the gap.⁴⁸ Virginians were then able to use England's deficiency to their advantage, and induced England finally to allow the production and exportation of iron in the 1727 "Act for encouraging Adventurers in Iron-Works," which provided for internal improvements and tax exemptions for "persons responsible for running or working iron works."⁴⁹ However, Chesapeake planter-businessmen did not wait for this official encouragement to begin establishing ironworks (see Appendix 2). Alexander Spotswood set up the Tubal Furnace in Spotsylvania County by 1719. Spotswood also founded three other furnaces, Massaponax Air,

Heite, "The Pioneer Phase of the Chesapeake Iron Industry: Naturalization of a Technology," Quarterly Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Virginia 38 (3) (1983), 144.

⁴⁷Hening's Statutes, 1: 488, 2: 124-125, 493-494. These acts, passed in 1657/8, 1661/2, and 1682, declared that the "exportation of hides, wool, and iron is not allowed" and was punishable by fines dependent upon the amount exported. Mercantilist theory held that colonies stimulated trade by serving as outlets for English manufactured goods and providing raw materials in return. Practically, this meant that England restricted all trade with other imperial powers, especially the Dutch during the seventeenth century, and the processing of raw materials into manufactured goods in the colonies themselves. These restrictions were codified in the Navigation Acts, which largely lacked enforcement mechanisms.

⁴⁸Robbins, The Principio Company: Iron-Making in Colonial Maryland, 1720-1781 (New York, 1986), 11-12; Heite, "The Pioneer Phase of the Chesapeake Iron Industry," 139.

⁴⁹Hening's Statutes, 4: 228-231. Similar acts were levied in 1730 and 1748, Ibid., 4: 296-299, 6: 137-140. See also C. Robert Haywood, "Economic Sanctions: Use of the Threat of Manufacturing by the Southern Colonies," JSH 25 (2) (May 1959), 210-211.

Fredericksville, and Germanna, in 1727, 1728, and 1732 respectively.⁵⁰ A group of British merchants, in an arrangement similar to the one the Bristol merchants employed a year later, established the Principio Company in 1720. The Pine Forge was founded in the Shenandoah region in 1725, and the Baltimore Company began operations by 1731. The successes of larger establishments such as the Principio and Baltimore Companies, both in Maryland, spurred others, such as Tayloe, John Snowden, and William Byrd II, to erect their own ironworks during the 1730s. Philemon Lloyd, an important Maryland planter and official, described the situation best in 1722 when he said that the iron industry was spreading “more or less all over the Country.”⁵¹

Once appointed, Tayloe wasted no time in getting the new works underway. Within months, Tayloe chose a location on a branch of the Rappahannock River in King George County for the furnace. He purchased 50 acres from John Underwood on Foxhall’s Mill Run, so called because a water grist mill operated by John Foxhall of Westmoreland County had existed at the site since the seventeenth century.⁵² By the late-1720s, the mill was known as the Mines Mill, and the creek as the Bristol Mine Run. Tayloe regularly added other lands as well. In June of 1726, he purchased 92 acres from Mark Hardin and 300 acres from Timothy Reading. John Williams, a Bristol Mariner, purchased an additional 680 acres for the company as well as two lots in the nearby town

⁵⁰John T. Schlotterbeck, “Plantation and Farm: Social and Economic Change in Orange and Green Counties, Virginia, 1716-1860,” unpublished dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1980; Heite, “The Pioneer Phase of the Chesapeake Iron Industry,” 142-143.

⁵¹Keach Johnson, “Genesis of the Baltimore Company,” *JSH* 19 (May 1953), 157-179, quote, 162; Robbins, *The Principio Company*, *passim*; Ronald Lewis, *Coal, Iron, and Slaves: Industrial Slavery in Maryland and Virginia, 1715-1865* (Westport, Conn., 1979), chapter 1.

⁵²King George Deed Book, 1: 14-19.

of Falmouth. During the 1730s, Tayloe acquired at least 350 additional acres in King George County adjoining the company's other lands. Altogether, the Bristol Ironworks Company owned over 1,350 acres by the 1730s.⁵³ Such an extensive estate was necessary for the successful operating of an ironworks, as furnaces required huge amounts of raw materials, especially wood.

The Bristol Ironworks was located at the confluence of the Bristol Mine Run and Rappahannock River in King George County. The company operated ore mines and a blast furnace on the property. Tayloe likely dammed the creek to provide a source of water power for the mill's waterwheel, as the creek was surrounded on both sides by high cliffs. The estate consisted of "one Iron Furnace, a Grist Mill, Coal House, Stables and Divers other Houses."⁵⁴ The square brick and stone remains of the furnace still exist, as do numerous piles of slag, a byproduct of the iron production process that indicates that the furnace operated over an extensive period of time. Tayloe produced pig iron, rectangular chunks of workable iron about a half foot wide, four feet long, and weighing fifty or more pounds each, into the early 1740s.⁵⁵ Indeed, several pigs bearing the Bristol Company mark "BC" have survived, and are dated 1734, 1740, and 1742.⁵⁶

⁵³King George Deed Book, 1: 641-642, 1A: 115-118, 2: 59-63; Northern Neck Warrants, 153.

⁵⁴King George County Deed Book, 2: 429-431.

⁵⁵ For other physical descriptions of bar and pig iron see Robbins, The Principio Company, 20-21; David Curtis Skaggs, "John Semple and the Development of the Potomac River Valley," VMHB 92 (3) (1984), 285.

⁵⁶Bristol Iron Works File, Tate Thompson Brady Papers, VHS. Although the location of the site is known, no archaeological investigations have been completed (44WM44). The Bristol Company pig irons are at the Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

The records are unclear regarding the composition of the workforce at Bristol. Documents specifically related to the ironworks seem to indicate that work at Bristol was performed mostly by white indentured servants and wage workers. From the company records, it appears Tayloe employed only a few African Americans at Bristol, including Sharper and Pompey, valued together at £68 and listed without occupation, but apparently skilled. Tayloe likely employed the few Bristol slaves in the full variety of jobs related to the ironworks complex. An inventory of Tayloe's King George County estate from 1747, at least five years after the ironworks closed, indicates that 33 slave men and women resided on Tayloe's lands there. It is possible that Tayloe used slave labor at Bristol and then kept some of the slaves on to work his King George County lands once he sold the works. This was the case with Sharper and Pompey, whom Tayloe transferred from Bristol to his Neabsco Furnace in Prince William County by 1747.⁵⁷ The use of a mostly white work force would not have been unusual in this period. For example, Alexander Spotswood used German and Swiss miners at his Germanna ironworks in Spotsylvania.⁵⁸ However, the company's incomplete records make it impossible to determine the racial composition of Bristol's labor force with any certainty.

Either way, at least a dozen and probably more men labored at the Bristol furnace site at jobs including timbering, coaling, mining, carting, milling, ironmaking, and shipping. The work was difficult, constant, and exhausting, and the workers often expressed their discontentment. Augustine Washington, George Washington's father, captured a "Runaway Servant belonging to the Bristoll Iron works under the Care of

⁵⁷John Tayloe Estate Inventory.

⁵⁸Schlotterbeck, "Plantation and Farm," 14.

Colo: John Tayloe" in 1727. In 1737, James Sumners, "a Servant Man" from the "West Country," also ran away.⁵⁹ The most shocking demonstration occurred in 1729.

Apparently, the company encountered some financial difficulties in 1729 and was unable to pay the workers on time. At least a dozen men, including Thomas Steele, William Payne, John Tingle, Thomas Ozban, Stephen Williams, Thomas Nicholas, James Legoes, Robert Carr, William Jones, Joshua Jess, James Powell, and Mathew McMahon, "servants belonging to the Bristol Iron Mines," seized a ship at the works' landing and refused to release it until they were paid. The authorities dispersed the "riot," arrested and jailed the servants, and whipped and fined the ringleaders, Powell and McMahon.⁶⁰

While it is nearly impossible to determine the production and profit levels of the Bristol Ironworks, the Bristol merchants expressed their support of Tayloe's management over the years. The difficulties of 1729 were probably not a regular occurrence. In 1724, Tayloe was appointed the sole director of the works. Then, in 1728, for "Divers and Manifold good Services . . . and also for the respect and esteem they . . . the said partners beareth toward the said John Tayloe" the partners offered Tayloe all the remaining available shares in the company amounting to a 10 percent interest. The following year the partners tendered to Tayloe, their "friend and partner," a power of attorney for all matters related to the works.⁶¹ During the 1730s, the partners seem to have given Tayloe a free hand in expanding and shaping the works as he saw fit. By the

⁵⁹Westmoreland County Orders, 1721-1731, 19a; Virginia Gazette, March 18, 1737.

⁶⁰Bristol Iron Works File, Tate Thompson Brady Papers.

⁶¹Richmond County Deed Book, 8: 488-491.

1740s, however, the Bristol partners apparently lost interest in the Virginia works, and authorized Tayloe to “Dispose of all” of their interests in the property to any interested purchaser. In March of 1741, Tayloe sold the main part of the furnace estate containing 440 acres to a partnership including Ralph Falkner and Edward Neale of Maryland, and Virginians John Triplett, Charles Ewell, and Nathaniel Chapman, for £225 sterling.⁶² Tayloe handled the “B Co. Disburstments [sic],” or the partners’ shares of the money made from the sale of the estate. However, Tayloe appears to have stayed involved with the Bristol works, if only briefly. In 1741, he received an annual salary of £60, and recorded having paid £10 for “the Rent of the Furnace 1 Years.” It is possible that Tayloe continued to operate the works on his own behalf—he still owned a tenth of the original company—as well as for the benefit of the new partner-owners. Tayloe likely continued to manufacture iron at Bristol through at least 1742. Indeed, in 1741, the works received 903 tons of iron ore, enough to keep the furnace in blast for almost 300 continuous days.⁶³ In 1742, however, Tayloe sold what remaining company property he owned, probably signaling the end of his involvement with, as well as the closing of, the Bristol Ironworks.⁶⁴

The end of Bristol did not signal the end of Tayloe’s involvement with the colonial iron industry. Instead, it marked the beginning of an enterprise in which three generations of Tayloe planter-businessmen would participate. As the 1730s advanced, Tayloe apparently developed a desire to work for himself. Indeed, it is likely that even as

⁶²King George County Deed Book, 2: 429-431.

⁶³Account of John Tayloe [with the Bristol Ironworks], TFP, 1: 38.

⁶⁴King George County Deed Book, 2: 445-446.

early as January of 1728/9, Tayloe was looking for a new venture in which to engage. At that time, he wrote to Robert “King” Carter, friend and fellow planter-businessman, with an offer. Knowing that Carter had interests in copper mining, Tayloe urged him to join him in an iron-mining venture. Carter declined, replying, “At this time I am [not] willing to be a joynt Undertaker with your Society untill I am better acquainted with the progress you are likely to make . . . [However] Your Second proposal has really a great deal of temptation in it . . . that I might make a Considerable Advantage by delivering you Oar [ore] at the landing.” Carter had learned the hard way to choose his investments carefully. The previous year, his Frying Pan Copper Mine Company folded when British merchants found the quality of Carter’s ore mediocre. Yet Carter encouraged Tayloe. “I am glad to find so many considerable gentlemen are engag’d in designs of digging Treasure out of the Earth and do heartily wish them success in their Undertakings.”⁶⁵

These initial plans for a new venture came to fruition by 1737. In that year, Tayloe founded his own ironworks on Neabsco Creek, a branch of the Occoquan River, in Prince William County. During the 1730s, Tayloe steadily accumulated large tracts of land in Prince William County. By 1737 he owned approximately 9,000 acres bounded on the south by Quantico Creek, on the north by the Occoquan River, and on the east by the Potomac River.⁶⁶ One of Tayloe’s first concerns, and one he had discussed with Carter, was the issue of obtaining the necessary iron ore for production. Since Tayloe’s

⁶⁵Robert Carter to Colo. John Tayloe, January 29, 1728/9, Robert Carter Letterbook, 1728-1730, VHS; Louis Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall: A Virginia Planter of the Eighteenth Century (Charlottesville, Va., 1965), 18.

⁶⁶Stafford County Deeds, TFP, 5: 39, 41; Prince William County Deed Book, A, 153, 387; B: 4-7, 31, 34, 245, 439; D: 364; E: 10; See also, Deeds, TFP, 5: 53, 602, 604.

lands were part of the “Fairfax Proprietary,” a tract of over 5,000,000 acres in northern Virginia granted to the Honorable Thomas Lord Fairfax Baron Cameron, Tayloe was required to pay special fees and taxes on one-third of all ores and minerals his lands produced.⁶⁷ While his Neabsco lands did contain some ore deposits that he used from time to time, Tayloe decided to tackle the problem by finding a source not subject to the proprietary rules.

In 1738, Tayloe purchased lands containing quality iron ore deposits on the Patapsco River in Anne Arundel and Baltimore Counties, Maryland.⁶⁸ Maintaining a separate Maryland estate and having to float the ore around the western shore of Maryland to Neabsco was an expensive proposition. Thus, in 1738, Tayloe went to great lengths to convince the Council of Virginia, of which he was a member, to relieve “himself and other Adventurers in Iron Mines” from port duties on iron ore imported from Maryland. The Council agreed, and ordered “the Naval Officers of the several Districts into which any Oar shall be Imported to not require the Port duties or other fees . . . for any Vessels importing Iron Oar from Maryland for the use of the Iron Works here so [long] as such Vessels do not carry any other Goods & Merchandize.”⁶⁹ When Tayloe’s own ore banks came up short, as they likely did in the early years when he was just getting the mines established, Tayloe would sometimes purchase ore from Stephen

⁶⁷Northern Neck Warrants, ix-xii; Hughes, Surveyors and Statesmen, 107.

⁶⁸No deed evidence exists to pinpoint the precise date of purchase. However, his appeal to the Council to allow duty-free importation of ore in 1738, and his 1741 account book entries identifying his ore source as his “new Bank” point to this three-year period. By the 1750s, John Tayloe II owned about 300 acres in Anne Arundel and Baltimore Counties, from which he mined iron ore for the use of his Virginia ironworks. These lands were likely the ones purchased by John Tayloe I. Baltimore County Certificates, Patented, May 7, 1757, Maryland State Archives, S1190-65, Folder 4818; Account Book, TFP, 1: 38.

⁶⁹Executive Journals, 4: 433; CVSP, 38: 387.

Onion's ore bank in Maryland. Onion was a planter-businessman in his own right who would open a large ironworks with both furnaces and forges during the 1750s or 1760s. One instance when Tayloe relied on Onion occurred in 1741, when Tayloe purchased 718 tons of ore.⁷⁰ The special dispensation for importing Maryland ore would have been advantageous under these circumstances.

The works at Neabsco initially included at least one blast furnace and a water-powered grist and saw mill. The furnace sat at the base of a steep hill, while the workers' quarters sat on a relatively level ridge a short way up Neabsco Creek. Forging, smithing, and other processing activities were conducted on the eastern side of the creek, while the more central ironmaking and domestic areas were located on the western side. The furnace measured approximately thirty to forty feet square, and produced a competitive 600 tons per year by January of 1742.⁷¹ The ironworks quickly became a center in Prince William County for smith's work, as many of Tayloe's neighbors regularly brought items for repair or purchased tools or other products made at Neabsco. The Neabsco smiths, such as slave "Tom a Black Smith," shod horses, made hoes, repaired plows, and labored at a variety of similar tasks.⁷² Tayloe also engaged in shipbuilding at Neabsco. He owned several barge-like "ore flats" used to transport loads of Maryland ore down the Chesapeake Bay to the Potomac River, and then up the Potomac to Neabsco Creek. In

⁷⁰John Tayloe I Account Book, TFP, 1: 5-45.

⁷¹Carter L. Hudgins and Douglas W. Sanford, "Neabsco Mills Ironworks Site, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form," Center for Historic Preservation, Mary Washington College, 1993, Section 7, 1-4. A copy of this form is also located in the Neabsco Furnace File, Tate Thompson Brady Papers, VHS. Only Phase I and II archaeological investigations have been conducted at the Neabsco Ironworks Site (44PW629). See also, John Tayloe I Account Book, 1740-1741, TFP, 1: 35.

⁷²John Tayloe I Account Book, 1740-1741, TFP, 1: 23-25; John Tayloe Estate Inventory.

1741, Tayloe paid two men for “floating ore up Neabscoe,” and two others for “trimming a flat” and “repairing a float.”⁷³ Tayloe oversaw the construction of more substantial ships as well. In 1741, Whiddon Wallis worked “building a waiste to the new sloop.” No records enumerate the number of ships that were built at Neabsco or that Tayloe owned, but when he died in 1747, he left his son a full line of “Sloops, Schooners, boats and vessels.”⁷⁴ Shipbuilding and shipping generally would become an even more important industry under the management of John Tayloe II.

The ironworks was also a plantation that grew a variety of crops. In 1740, the works produced 634 barrels of corn, 2,022 bushels of oats, 31.75 bushels of wheat, 23.25 bushels of peas, 8.5 bushels of beans, 7,655 pounds of beef, 21,876 pounds of pork, and 5,368 pounds of venison. While most of these goods were used as provisions for the ironworks as well as Tayloe’s plantations, some were sent to market or sold in smaller quantities to the works’ neighbors. Tayloe sold over 175 barrels of corn, 2,000 pounds of beef, 7,000 pounds of pork, and 800 bushels of oats.⁷⁵ A small number of the 100 slaves appraised as a part of Tayloe’s Prince William County estate in 1747 likely were responsible for conducting this agricultural work. In 1755, the ironworks included two

⁷³John Tayloe I Account Book, 1740-1741, TFP, 1: 5-45.

⁷⁴John Tayloe I Account Book, 1740-1741, TFP, 1: 5-45; Will of John Tayloe I. The “waist” was the part of a ship’s deck between the poop and forecastle, or the middle part of the ship between the foremast and mainmast. Sloops and schooners were among the smallest, quickest, and most frequently built ships in the colonies. Sloops averaged 31 tons while schooners averaged 34 tons. See William Kelso, “Shipbuilding in Virginia, 1763-1774,” Records of the Columbia Historical Society (1973), 2-4; Arthur Pierce Middleton, “Ships and Shipbuilding in the Chesapeake Bay and Tributaries,” in Ernest M. Eller, ed., The Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution (Centerville, Md., 1981), 98.

⁷⁵John Tayloe I Account Book, 1740-1741, TFP, 1: 31.

agricultural quarters with “eight or nine [African-American] hands at each with Overseers.”⁷⁶

The Neabsco Ironworks lay almost eighty miles by land and over 150 miles by water from its owner’s home in Richmond County, Virginia. Therefore, Tayloe required a staff of managers, overseers, clerks, and laborers to run the works in his absence. It is possible that Tayloe hired some of the workers with whom he was already familiar at Bristol. Either way, Tayloe employed at least eight white men year-round in 1741. These wage workers, including Benjamin Wilkinson, John Jones, William Williams, Joseph Dean, Charles Ewell, Doctor Lawson, and John Dennis, received between £25 to £80 Virginia currency depending upon their position.⁷⁷ Nine other white men were hired to complete particular part-time tasks including “floating ore to the landing,” “work about the Funnel head,” “putting in a new charge & hearth,” and “building a waiste to the new sloop.”

Tayloe also purchased a significant number of slaves for the works during the 1740s. Several, such as Charles, Sharper, and Pompey, previously had worked at the Bristol Ironworks and were therefore experienced, skilled, and valuable ironworkers. In all, Tayloe owned 100 slaves valued at more than £2800 on his lands in Prince William County, many of whom probably resided at Neabsco and assisted with some part of the ironmaking process. Many of the Neabsco slaves were likely skilled or semi-skilled, but

⁷⁶John Tayloe Estate Inventory; Travers Nash Deposition, March 1789, Thomas Lawson v. John Tayloe’s executors, File 171, Fredericksburg Court Records. Citations hereafter will read document name, date, File 171.

⁷⁷Tayloe did purchase two slaves from the Bristol Company for his Neabsco Ironworks. John Tayloe I Account Book, 1740-1741, TFP, 1: 5-45. I am thankful to Professor Melvin Ely for pointing out the possibility that Doctor Lawson may not have been white. His research indicates that the name “Doctor” was popular among African Americans and may therefore mean that Lawson was a free black.

Tayloe's use of white wage workers indicates that white men held the master craftsman and supervisory positions. The mostly adult slave population consisted of 69 men and 31 women. An additional 40 slaves worked mining, carting, and shipping iron ore for Neabsco on Tayloe's Maryland estate as well. The predominance of males in Neabsco's slave population was typical of trends in slave population in Virginia overall during the first half of the eighteenth century. While records indicate that many slaves formed families (about 20% of the inventoried slaves were children), many of the men at Neabsco had difficulty establishing such relationships because of the small number of available partners.⁷⁸ The size and gender composition of the Neabsco workforce was comparable to that of other early ironworks (see Appendix 2). In 1732, Charles Chiswell of the Fredericksville Furnace advised William Byrd II that "one hundred and twenty slaves, including women, were necessary to carry on all the business of an iron works." Chiswell himself owned about 100 slaves, although he considered himself short-handed.⁷⁹ The Baltimore Company had about 150 slaves split between its various works, while the Nottingham Ironworks employed 153 slaves. Benjamin Moore owned 54 slaves whom he employed at his forge in King and Queen County, including 33 men and 21 women. The labor pattern at his forge is probably indicative of the sexual division of labor prevalent on most colonial iron plantations. The men at Moore's Forge held all the skilled occupations, such as forgerman, finer, hammerman, chafferyman, carpenter,

⁷⁸Allan Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800 (Chapel Hill, 1986), 68, 70, 355-356; John Tayloe Estate Inventory.

⁷⁹John Tayloe Estate Inventory; Charles Chiswell as quoted in Robbins, The Principio Company, 92.

cooper, collier, and blacksmith. The women worked in essential but ancillary services such as housekeeping, field work, and childcare.⁸⁰

On other parts of his estate, Tayloe employed a massive work force of 327 slaves in 1747. These slaves held a variety of skills and performed numerous tasks and occupations. Seventy-two slaves resided on Tayloe's home plantation, later known as Old House, in Richmond County, Virginia. Additional large quarters in Richmond, Essex, and Stafford Counties housed 42, 33, 21, and 19 slaves respectively. These communities included Africans and African Americans, men and women, the young and old, families and individuals. Generally, men outnumbered women at all of these quarters by a ratio of two to one.⁸¹ Recorded names such as Dembo, Faw, Moofaw, Quamones, Mingo, and Jingoe suggest that at least some of the slaves were first or second generation. Increasingly, however, Tayloe relied less on the slave trade to increase the size of his labor pool because the slave population by mid-century acquired the ability to reproduce naturally.⁸² By the 1740s, a large part of Tayloe's work force must have obtained some of the skills necessary to assist the various industrial enterprises present on the estate. In the instances when his slaves' skills were not advanced enough, Tayloe purchased or hired white men to perform particular tasks. By the 1740s, however, Tayloe increasingly placed slaves in crucial skilled and semi-skilled positions. Indeed, between

⁸⁰Robbins, The Principio Company, 121-122; "Scheme of a Lottery, for disposing of certain lands," Virginia Gazette, December 1, 1768.

⁸¹John Tayloe Estate Inventory.

⁸²Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves, 355-356. For good discussions of slave naming practices, see, Gary B. Nash, Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840 (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 79-88; Herbert G. Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925 (New York, 1976), 185-203; and Peter H. Wood, Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion (New York, 1974), 181-186.

one-quarter and one-third of Tayloe's 327 slaves likely performed craft or industrial work year-round.

When John Tayloe I died in November of 1747, he was among the wealthiest men in the colony. He passed to his only son, John Tayloe II, over 20,000 acres in five Virginia and three Maryland counties. On this vast estate, Tayloe operated a successful ironworks, an infant shipbuilding enterprise, three or more water-powered mills, and at least one regularly patronized smith's shop. He was also a well-known merchant's agent and dealer in slaves. On his lands, he grew tobacco, but also corn, wheat, oats, peas and beans; he raised hogs and cattle as well. Tayloe was accustomed to living in comfort and style. He resided in a refined plantation house complete with the latest furnishings and adornments of the period. His mansion included a minimum of 10 rooms as well as a Counting House (office) and Kitchen that were likely detached. He and his family ate off the latest Chinese porcelain and white saltglazed stoneware dishes, used knives and forks, drank tea, wine, and brandy, and flavored their foods with a variety of spices and seasonings. The family wore the latest fashions and possessed a varied wardrobe. Elizabeth Tayloe wore linen and silk dresses, suits, and "fashionable petticoats," while the children each regularly received new clothes and shoes. In one year alone, Tayloe purchased for himself, "6 shirts for my self, 3 handsom fash[iona]ble neckcloths, hose for summer wear, silk coat lined with silk, [and a] black silk waistcoat and britches."⁸³ Tayloe was literate and owned an extensive collection of history, oratory, and literature

⁸³Stephen Loyde and John Tayloe Account Book, 1708-1778, TFP: 2, 65, 107, 114; John Tayloe Estate Inventory.

books which later formed the foundation of an impressive family library.⁸⁴ A full contingent of household slaves tended to the family's every need.

Tayloe expanded the estate he received from his father from a respectable one consisting of 3,000 acres and 21 slaves to an impressive assemblage of over 20,000 acres and 327 slaves. His estate was easily worth between £30,000 to £40,000. He and a whole generation of other Virginians came of age in the midst of tremendous economic and social pressures, and responded to those pressures by creating a permanent place for diversification in Virginia's economy. In doing so, Tayloe and others like him redefined the identity of the planter class. During the first quarter of the eighteenth century, planters became planter-businessmen who of necessity looked beyond tobacco in their pursuit of wealth and social status.

The experiences of the turn of the century had proved that tobacco alone could not be depended upon to provide long-term security. Planter-businessmen increasingly experimented with other crops, invested in other businesses, and founded a variety of enterprises alongside their production of tobacco. This first generation of Virginia planter-businessmen bequeathed this legacy and identity to their children, confident that such entrepreneurialism would provide the foundation for the economic development of the colony. Robert "King" Carter expressed this sentiment to Tayloe in 1728/9 when he said, "I can't expect to see much good from these beginnings [of diversification] in my day[,] but the rising generation I hope will to the great benefit of this poor Country."⁸⁵

⁸⁴John Tayloe I Book Collection, Special Collections and Rare Books, Earl Gregg Swem Library, The College of William and Mary.

⁸⁵Robert Carter to Colo. John Tayloe, January 29, 1728/9.

CHAPTER II

A MODEL PLANTER-BUSINESSMAN: JOHN TAYLOE II

John Tayloe II inherited and expanded upon the large agricultural and industrial estate left him by his father. When the elder Tayloe died in 1747, John the younger was a married man in his late twenties who had already established a name for himself as a political leader and businessman. Sorrowful as he certainly was over his father's passing, the younger Tayloe likely was anxious to possess his own landed estate, the accepted symbol of gentry status and main source of wealth for the planter class. From the extensive base of more than 20,000 acres and 320 slaves, Tayloe built an even larger and much more diversified estate. An entrepreneur and an innovator, he was not content merely to maintain the comfort that his father's achievements provided the family, a choice popular among some contemporary planters.¹ By the 1770s, his planting,

¹Some historians have characterized John Tayloe II's generation of planters as merely maintaining and preserving wealth they inherited without contributing anything new to their estates or to society at large. These scholars have largely overlooked the entrepreneurial and business activities of the colonial planter class. See Thomas M. Doerflinger, A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia (Chapel Hill, 1986), 184 and *passim*; Jean B. Russo, "A Model Planter: Edward Lloyd IV of Maryland, 1770-1796," William and Mary Quarterly (hereafter WMQ) 3d ser., 49 (January 1992), 62; William H. Siener, "Economic Development in Revolutionary Virginia: Fredericksburg, 1750-1810," unpublished dissertation, The College of William and Mary, 1982. Edwin Perkins makes a useful distinction between "entrepreneurs" and "maintainers." The former "were individuals willing to risk the expenditure of capital and labor in an effort to increase their income levels over the long run and to accumulate greater property and wealth"; the latter's "primary aim . . . was to maintain the status quo in their living standards rather than to enhance them." Perkins characterized most members of the planter class as entrepreneurs. Edwin Perkins, "The Entrepreneurial Spirit in Colonial America: The Foundations of Modern Business History," Business History Review 63 (1) (Spring 1989), 164, 169-170, 176-177. For other definitions of entrepreneurialism, see Rudolf Braun, "The Rise of a Rural Class of Entrepreneurs," Journal of World History 10 (1967), 557; Jay R. Mandle, "The Plantation Economy: An Essay in Definition," Science and Society 36 (Spring 1972), 59-61; Aubrey C. Land, Bases

business, and other entrepreneurial activities made him one of the fifteen wealthiest men in Virginia.

While his wealth was extraordinary, Tayloe was in many ways a model Virginia planter. His main cash crop was tobacco, which he consigned to British merchants in return for book credits.² He employed a large force of slaves who performed most of the domestic, agricultural, and skilled-craft work that had to be done around the plantations. He lived in a large Georgian mansion, the preferred style of colonial Virginia planters, and furnished it with the latest consumer goods available on the market. Moreover, he held all of the notable county and colony-wide political offices to which planters aspired.

Tayloe was also representative of the early Virginia planter class in another way--his business, entrepreneurial, and industrial activities. Tayloe inherited one ironworks and considerably expanded those operations to include other forges and furnaces. His iron activities spawned an active shipbuilding operation, which furthered his various planter and merchant activities. He regularly invested in a variety of other business schemes, and several times joined groups of other prominent planters in partnerships promoting new business or industrial activities. He speculated in large tracts of land which he profitably rented or resold, and even established a subdivided manor that provided him with regular rental income throughout his life. Saw and grist mills dotted his estate and added to his income through sales and tolls.³ On his plantations--the very

of the Plantation Society (Columbia, 1969), 99-101; Robert Gallman, "Slavery and Southern Economic Growth," Southern Economic Journal XLV (1979), 1018.

²Planters received credits to their accounts when British merchants sold their crops; they usually used these credits to purchase various consumer goods. Money rarely changed hands in these exchanges.

³Millowners were permitted by law to charge their customers a fee or toll for grinding their grain. See William Waller Hening, ed., The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from

FIGURE 3



**John Tayloe II (1721-1779), Portrait by John Wollaston
Original at Smithsonian Institution**

centers of his more traditional agricultural activities--Taylor established a variety of profitable small craft industries, including blacksmithing, clothmaking, shoemaking, fishing, and distilling. Neighbors regularly patronized Taylor's various craft and industrial services. John Taylor II, like his father before him, was a planter-businessman. He saw no contradiction or conflict between his interests in land and slaves and those in business and industry. Indeed, Taylor and other planters perceived these activities as being intertwined and part of a symbiotic effort to create economic security and prosperity. Through this combination of economic activities, planters created a common culture that integrated plantation agriculture and a whole range of ancillary business and industrial services.⁴

Taylor made his home, as had his father and grandfather before him, in Richmond County in the Northern Neck of Virginia. His home plantation, later known as Old House, sat near Rappahannock Creek and overlooked the broad Rappahannock River. Old House, however, was not the home for which John Taylor would be remembered. Instead, Mt. Airy, a russet sandstone Georgian mansion with flanking dependencies, became the family's renowned seat by the early-1760s. Taylor built the mansion on land his father had acquired during the 1740s adjacent to the Old House lands, and with it

the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619 [hereafter *Hening's Statutes*] (Charlottesville, 1969), 1: 301, 348.

⁴Martin H. Quitt, "Immigrant Origins of the Virginia Gentry: A Study of Cultural Transmission and Innovation," *WMQ* 3d ser., 45 (4) (October 1988), 644; Ronald Lewis, *Coal, Iron, and Slaves: Industrial Slavery in Maryland and Virginia, 1715-1865* (Westport, Conn., 1979), 3; Gerald W. Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (London, 1972), 8; Keach Johnson, "The Baltimore Company Seeks English Markets: A Study of the Anglo-American Iron Trade, 1731-1755," *WMQ* 3d ser., 16 (1959), 40. Charles Grant provides a similar argument for Kent, Connecticut, in *Democracy in the Connecticut Frontier Town of Kent* (New York, 1961), 40-44.

FIGURE 4



**Mt. Airy, Richmond County, Virginia, built circa 1760s
Photograph by the author**

announced his arrival as a prominent and successful planter-businessman.⁵ Indeed, Tayloe's numerous investment and entrepreneurial activities during the 1750s were precisely what had made the construction of such an extravagant and impressive mansion possible.

Robert Carter's tutor, Philip Vickers Fithian, provided one of the most vivid descriptions of the Tayloes' style of living at Mt. Airy. Fithian recalled,

Here is an elegant Seat!--The House is about the Size of Mr. Carters, built with Stone, & finished curiously, & ornamented with various paintings, & rich Pictures . . . In the Dining-Room, besides many other fine Pieces, are twenty four of the most celebrated among the English Race-Horses, Drawn masterly, & set in elegant gilt Frames.--He has near the great House, two fine two story stone Houses, the one is used as a Kitchen, & the other, for a nursery, & Lodging Rooms--He has also a large well formed, beautiful Garden, as fine in every Respect as any I have seen in *Virginia*. In it stand four large beautiful Marble Statues--From this House there is a good prospect of the River *Rapahannock* . . . The young Ladies played several tunes for us, & in good Taste on the *Harpsichord*; We supp'd at nine' & had the usual Toasts.⁶

When building Mt. Airy, Tayloe insisted on the finest materials. He used marble for the floors, mahogany for paneling, silver trim, and a French cut-glass chandelier in the parlor.⁷ Gardens featured a deer park and bowling green. Brick outbuildings, including a stone dairy, coach houses, a smokehouse, and a counting room, stable, and orangery surrounded the mansion and completed Tayloe's main plantation village.⁸

⁵Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (New York, 1982), 34-42, 74-79; William S. Rasmussen, "Palladio in Tidewater Virginia: Mount Airy and Blandfield," in Mario di Valmarana, ed., *Building by the Book* (Charlottesville, 1984), 76.

⁶H. D. Farish, ed., *Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion* (hereafter *Fithian's Journal*) (Williamsburg, Va., 1945), 94.

⁷Rasmussen, "Palladio in Tidewater Virginia," 82.

⁸*Ibid.*, 81.

The successful business activities that allowed Tayloe to provide such comfortable surroundings for his family were intricately bound up with and even dependent upon his political power and influence. As a young man of twenty-one, Tayloe got his first taste of politics and diplomacy as one of the negotiators “with the Indians at Annapolis” in 1742, then with the Six Nations of the Iroquois at Lancaster in 1744. The Lancaster Treaty divested the Six Nations of their lands between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Ohio River.⁹ Land speculators, including Tayloe himself, quickly moved in to acquire these newly available lands. In 1745, Tayloe and about a dozen others formed the Patton Association, and successfully petitioned for a grant of 100,000 acres in Augusta County that, in theory, stretched as far west as the Mississippi River. The Council gave the Association four years to survey the lands, then extended the deadline by two years when the group failed to complete all the surveying by May of 1749. Tayloe surveyed for himself four tracts including almost 5,000 acres on Shallow Creek and Indian River.¹⁰ It is hard to say whether Tayloe’s speculative interests in those lands developed before or after his experience as an Indian Commissioner.

Thereafter, Tayloe held a variety of county and militia offices, such as justice of the peace and post officer. He also held positions directly related to his business

⁹ H. R. McIlwaine, ed., Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (hereafter Executive Journals) (Richmond, 1925), 5: 98, 394-407; “Miscellaneous Documents Colonial and State,” Virginia Magazine of History and Biography (hereafter VMHB) 18 (4) (October 1910), 394-407. The Six Nations of the Iroquois included the Mohawks, Senecas, Onandagas, Oneidas, Cayugas and Tuscaroras. For more information on the Six Nations, see Daniel K. Richter, The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization (Chapel Hill, 1992), and Francis Jennings, The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from Its Beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 (New York, 1984).

¹⁰ Executive Journals, 5: 173, 288, 197; F. B. Kegley, Kegley’s Virginia Frontier: The Beginning of the Southwest, the Roanoke of Colonial Days, 1740-1783 (Roanoke, Va., 1938), 121, 124. The Patton Associates was named after a member of the Association, James Patton.

interests, such as trustee for the town of Dumfries in Prince William County, not far from his two ironmaking companies.¹¹ Tayloe's most significant political offices, however, included service as a burgess from Richmond County and a member of the Governor's Council, positions he held consecutively for over two decades. Tayloe, in alliance with Edmund Jennings and his various London contacts, had done some maneuvering "to get . . . [Tayloe] appointed one of his Majesties Council in Virginia," and finally was successful in 1756.¹² John Tayloe I had also held a coveted seat on the Council, and through that body had received important abatements on port duties and other fees on iron ore imported from outside of Virginia. Following in his father's footsteps, the younger Tayloe successfully petitioned to renew that advantageous legislation during the 1750s.¹³ Once a member of these prestigious bodies, Tayloe held a variety of internal positions such as administrator of the Oaths of Allegiance and Receiver General.¹⁴ These positions allowed Tayloe to make connections, influence legislation, and seize financial opportunities required by any successful planter-businessman. Tayloe summed up the

¹¹Executive Journals, 5: 394; Writers Project Administration, Prince William: The Story of Its People and Its Places (Manassas, Va., 1988), 89; John Tayloe, Williamsburg, to William Byrd, April 4, 1758, in Marion Tinling, ed., The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia, 1684-1776 (Charlottesville, 1977), 2: 645-646.

¹²Edmund Jennings II to Coll. Tayloe, 1756, Edmund Jennings Letterbook, p. 179-180, Virginia Historical Society (hereafter VHS).

¹³Executive Journals, 4: 433; William P. Palmer, Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts (hereafter CVSP) (New York, 1968), 38: 387. See also Braun, "The Rise of a Rural Class of Entrepreneurs," 554.

¹⁴Executive Journals, 6: 229; John Pendleton Kennedy, Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia (Richmond, 1915), 1766-1769 volume.

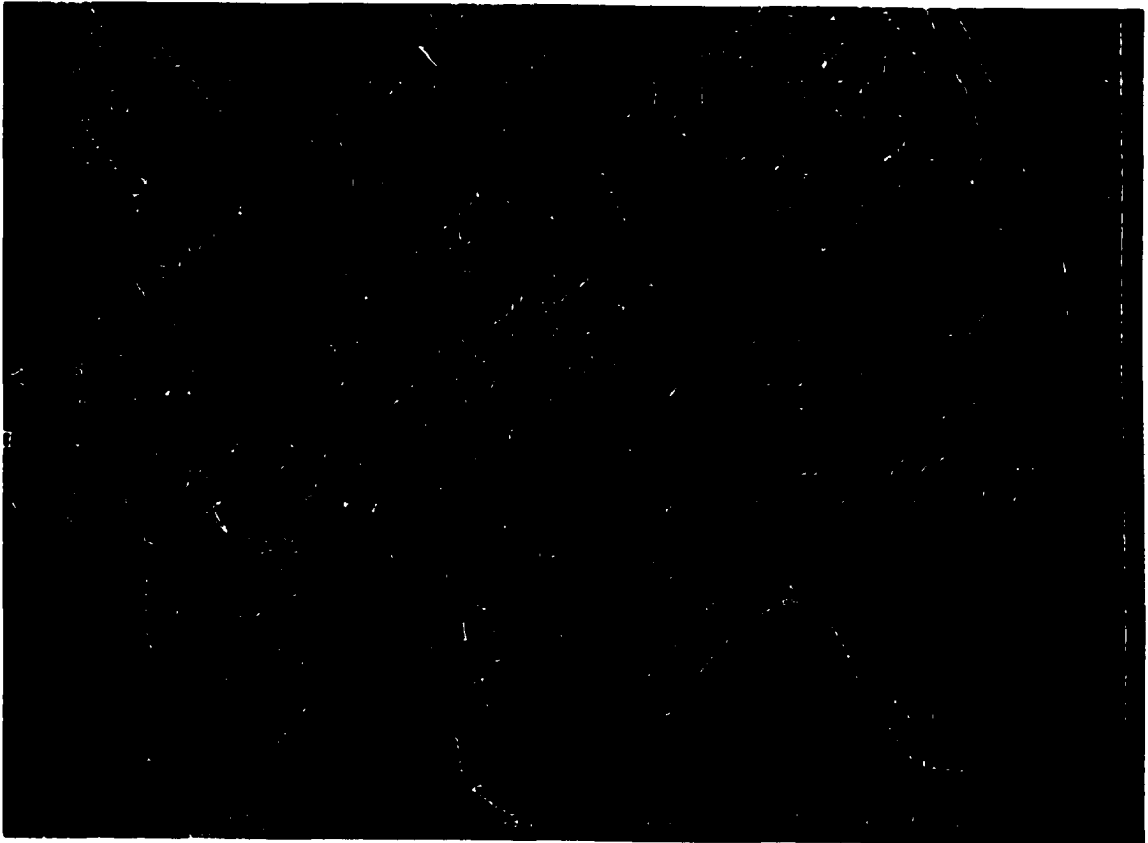
connection between wealth, politics, and influence best when he noted dryly in an account book in 1761, “paid for reappointment in the Council £25.19.0.”¹⁵

John Tayloe II began his career as a planter-businessman by building his landed base. Some of his expenditures were related solely to his agricultural needs, while others had more to do with his business and speculative interests. The mansion Tayloe inherited from his father was situated on approximately 2,000 acres in Richmond County. As Tayloe built Mt. Airy, he methodically purchased all the contiguous tracts, creating one large estate by 1770 consisting of at least 6,000 acres mostly bound by the lands of his friend and neighbor, Landon Carter.¹⁶ Out of the Richmond County acreage, Tayloe created or expanded upon five working plantations. He did not plant on lands directly tied to Mt. Airy, but instead cultivated as a separate quarter the lands that constituted the original Old House estate. Tayloe also inherited the Fork Quarter (or Forkland) adjacent to Old House. In 1751, Tayloe purchased Menokin from Philip Ludwell, a 1,000-acre tract situated west of and bordering his main estate. Tayloe’s slaves worked these lands until the 1770s, when he built a mansion there as a wedding gift for his daughter Rebecca

¹⁵John Tayloe II Account Book, 1749-1768, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Reel 2: Frame 181. A large part of the Tayloe Family Papers at the VHS have been microfilmed as part of the Records of Ante-Bellum Southern Plantation, Series M, Part 1: The Tayloe Family. These papers will hereafter be expressed as TFP, Reel: Frame, to distinguish them from Tayloe family collections that are not part of the microfilm collected located at the VHS and other repositories.

¹⁶Will of John Tayloe I, TFP, 5: 103-112; Land Plat of John Tayloe’s Property in Richmond County, April 1774, Library of Virginia; A List of Lands, 1763, TFP, 5: 152-153; Richmond County Deed Book 11: 319, 12: 60, 338, 14: 501; Gertrude E. Gray, comp., Virginia Northern Neck Land Grants, 1742-1775 (Baltimore, 1988), 2: 96; Essex County Deed Book 12: 753; John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, to Robert Wormeley Carter, March 30, 1767, Carter Family Papers, VHS, Mss 10: 140.

FIGURE 5



**Plat of John Tayloe's Property in Richmond County, 1774
Library of Virginia**

and son-in-law and signer of the Declaration of Independence, Francis Lightfoot Lee.¹⁷

East of Mt. Airy, Tayloe carved out a fifth plantation named Marske or Maskfield.

Tayloe also held a number of other impressive plantations in surrounding counties. Directly across the Rappahannock River in Essex County, Tayloe owned Gwinfield, a plantation consisting of about 3,000 acres. Northwest of Richmond and Essex Counties, Tayloe owned Chatterton Plantation in Stafford County and a 900-acre plantation called Hopyard in King George County, as well as the residual acreage that his father held in the latter county from the Bristol Ironworks Company. Tayloe's King George County holdings also included an ordinary situated on three lots in Leedstown bounded by George and Fairfax Streets.¹⁸ In conjunction with his ironmaking endeavors, Tayloe accumulated over 18,000 acres in Prince William County that included his two iron companies and supplied them with natural resources. He owned some of these lands in partnership with Presly Thornton of Northumberland County, his generally silent partner in the Occoquan Company. Out of his vast Prince William County holdings, Tayloe carved Deep Hole Plantation just north of Free Stone Point at the confluence of the Occoquan and Potomac Rivers.¹⁹ Deep Hole included a productive fishing hole that provided the family with a small source of income into the nineteenth century. Several hundred acres of land in Baltimore and Anne Arundel Counties, Maryland, supplied

¹⁷Richmond County Deed Book 14: 501. Menokin is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and currently stands in ruins. In 1995, concerned citizens formed the Menokin Foundation and spearheaded an ongoing effort to save, study, and restore the mansion.

¹⁸John Tayloe I Will; A List of Lands; King George County Deed Book 3: 477; Essex County Deed Book 14: 395-403; Richmond County Order Book 6: 135, 157.

¹⁹John Tayloe I Will; Deeds, TFP, 5: 142, 135-136, 604; A List of Lands; Prince William County Deed Book L, 311, 359, M: 1, O: 66, 126, 389, Q: 356, 474.

Tayloe's works with a regular source of iron ore. Tayloe also owned two large quarters in Charles County, Maryland, which served strictly agricultural functions.²⁰ In addition, Tayloe inherited a 4,000-acre tract in Loudoun County called Ketocton (or Kittockton) Manor.²¹ Finally, Tayloe owned a house complete with outbuildings situated on two lots on Nicholson Street in Williamsburg in which he resided while attending to his duties as a burgess and councilman.²² Far from simply maintaining the wealth and status he inherited, John Tayloe II continued to build and diversify an already impressive estate. The younger Tayloe had inherited 20,000 acres from his father. But by his death in 1779, his holdings totaled over 40,000 acres in ten Virginia and Maryland counties. These included 13 separate agricultural tracts.

Tayloe centralized his main agricultural activities in the plantations situated near the Rappahannock River. The Rappahannock tracts, or Mt. Airy Department, included the seven separate but interdependent farms in Richmond, Essex, and King George Counties: Mt. Airy, Old House, Forkland, Marske, Menokin, Gwinfield, and Hopyard. His two Maryland quarters in Charles County ranked second in importance in agricultural production. During John Tayloe II's lifetime, only Mt. Airy and Menokin were distinguished by mansion houses; the other plantations generally supported only a modest

²⁰John Tayloe Estate Inventory, November 2, 1747, Richmond County Will Book 5: 547-553; Baltimore County Certificates, Patented, May 7, 1757, Maryland State Archives (hereafter MSA), S1190-65, Folder 4818; Anne Arundel County Deed BB 2: 629; A List of Lands; Stephen Loyde and John Tayloe Account Book, 1708-1778, TFP, 2: 11-173.

²¹John Tayloe I Will; Peggy Shomo Joyner, comp., Abstracts of Virginia's Northern Neck Warrants and Surveys, 1710-1780 (Portsmouth, Va., 1986), 129.

²²Mary A. Stephenson, "Tayloe House Historical Report, Block 28, Building 3, Lot 262," unpublished research report 1523, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (hereafter CWF), 1949; York County Deed Book VI: 234.

overseer's house, quarters for the slaves, and other necessary outbuildings. At least one white overseer supervised activities at each farm and several white craftsmen oversaw skilled slaves' craft work at Mt. Airy.²³

Approximately a dozen whites besides the Tayloes themselves lived and worked on the estate. During the 1770s, the decade during which records of Tayloe's agricultural activities are most complete, Joseph Seamon and Avery Dyer performed the duties of overseers at the two Maryland quarters, while Mr. Pugh managed Gwinfield, Mr. Fuller oversaw the Hopyard, and Mr. Smith supervised Marske.²⁴ During the 1760s and 1770s, Simon Sallard, James Fraily, Tom Reynolds, William Tutt, and Mr. Morgan all worked as overseers at the various Rappahannock plantations.²⁵ Tayloe also employed Griffin Garland as his manager or agent. Managers and agents were more than overseers --they conducted business for planters on an estate-wide level and provided the key link between planters and the various parts of their widespread estates. Garland helped coordinate production and marketing, corresponded on Tayloe's behalf, advertised for Tayloe's runaway slaves, regularly traveled to inspect operations at the outlying plantations, and assisted in numerous other ways with the daily activities of the individual plantations and the overall estate. While Tayloe was often disgruntled with his overseers'

²³Several labor contracts indicate the role of white craftsmen at Mt. Airy. Between at least 1778 and 1780, Tayloe hired William Hendren to "look after the Several Negroes put under his Care at Landsdown in the Manufactory of Cotton Wood & Flax." Similarly, carpenter Robert Hall's duties included "looking after the sundry Carpenters of Collo. Tayloe." See John Tayloe II Account Book, 1776-1786, TFP, 2: 298, 306-307, 336, 343, 352.

²⁴Loyde and Tayloe Account Book, *passim*.

²⁵Jack P. Greene, The Diary of Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778 (hereafter Landon Carter Diary) (Charlottesville, 1965), 1: 304, 318, 360, 386, 421; 2: 642. Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, Christmas Eve, 1771, File 171, Fredericksburg Court Records. See also John Tayloe Account Book, 1776-1786.

performance, he relied upon and trusted his agents like Griffin Garland to conduct themselves with his best interests in mind.

African-American slaves' work, knowledge, and skills were central to the agricultural and craft production on the Rappahannock estates. Approximately 327 slaves lived and worked across the entire Tayloe estate when John Tayloe II assumed control. As of 1747, slaves inhabited the various Rappahannock plantations in the following numbers: 72 resided at Old House (43 males, 29 females); 33 and 19 slaves, respectively, lived on two other unspecified Richmond County quarters (20 males, 13 females; 12 males, 7 females); 42 lived on the remaining Bristol Company lands (27 males, 15 females); and 40 slaves resided at the various Maryland quarters. In addition, 100 slaves lived and worked on the Prince William County lands, while another 21 resided at Chatterton Plantation in Stafford County.²⁶

Thereafter, the size of the estate-wide slave population increased through Tayloe's purchases of new slaves and natural increase within the slave communities. Tayloe's inherited slave population had a sex ratio of approximately 1.3 men for every one woman. While skewed towards men, this ratio allowed for the formation of families within the new slave community and was the main factor in the growth of Tayloe's slave population.²⁷ In addition, Tayloe made numerous small purchases of slaves. Throughout the 1750s, Tayloe expanded his holdings at his ironworks through the purchases of at

²⁶John Tayloe Estate Inventory.

²⁷ For detailed demographic information on slave population growth during the mid-eighteenth century see Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill, 1986), 68-73, 352-380; Allan Kulikoff, "The Origins of Afro-American Society in Tidewater Maryland and Virginia, 1700-1790," *WMQ* 3d ser., 35 (2) (April 1978), 240-250.

least 35 slaves. For his other farms, for example, Tayloe bought three men from George Moore during the 1760s and purchased a boy from Carter Braxton in 1769 for £25.²⁸

By 1760, Tayloe had over 170 slaves laboring in some facet of iron production in Prince William County and iron mining in Maryland. Furthermore, Tayloe quickly sent slaves to begin clearing his backcountry lands in 1757 in the part of Fairfax County that became Loudoun County. As early as 1749, 16 slaves worked there under the supervision of overseer Ferdinand O'Neil. Throughout the 1760s, Tayloe paid taxes on at least a dozen slaves on those same lands.²⁹ The populations of his Rappahannock plantations during the 1760s and 1770s are more difficult to ascertain, as Tayloe ordered that his estate not be inventoried and appraised upon his death. As many as 44 men, women, and children resided at the Hopyard during the 1760s and 1770s, judging by the numbers of clothing articles, shoes, and other provisions he sent for his slaves there. Tayloe noted in his accounts that 23 slaves resided on one part of his Charles County, Maryland, lands, while 60 provided labor for a second quarter there. In the 1770s, at least 4 slaves received provisions at Potomack Quarter, while a small family of 3 resided at Marske Plantation in Richmond County. At Gwinfield in Essex County, approximately 30 slaves lived and worked.³⁰ When Tayloe presented his daughter Rebecca and new son-in-law Francis Lightfoot Lee with Menokin Plantation as a wedding gift in 1778, he included 20

²⁸ Occoquan Company Accounts, TFP, 2: 186, 196; Document 32, September 12, 1759, File 171; Virginia Gazette, July 23, 1767; Receipt, May 11, 1769, Legal Documents and Letters, 1756-1799, Tayloe Family Papers, UVA, 38-630.

²⁹ Ibid.; Occoquan Furnace Inventory, March 4, 1771, CWF, PH 00; Margaret L. Hopkins, comp., ed., Index to the Tithables of Loudoun County, Virginia, and to Slaveholders and Slaves, 1758-1786 (Baltimore, 1991), 139; Donald Sweig, "Northern Virginia Slavery: A Statistical and Demographic Investigation," unpublished dissertation, The College of William and Mary, 1982, 34.

³⁰ Stephen Loyde and John Tayloe Account Book, *passim*.

slaves who presumably had been working those lands in the years prior to the marriage.³¹ Together, these sources indicate that Tayloe's slave force included 500 or more African-American men, women, and children by his death in 1779.³²

While the daily work routines of the Mt. Airy slaves are discernible, it is more difficult to sketch the contours of slave culture and community on the Tayloe plantations. By the 1770s, Tayloe's slaves were mostly American-born and members of established Mt. Airy families. John Tayloe II neither sold nor freed many slaves. In addition, it seems that only a few slaves ran away from Tayloe's agricultural plantations. Slave Will ran from Chatterton Plantation in January of 1771 and Hopyard Bristol absconded in October of 1771.³³ Two other unidentified runaways apparently sent word to Tayloe that they would not return unless he agreed to hire or sell them. Tayloe was indignant and responded that he would "do neither until they return to a sense of duty."³⁴ At least one of Tayloe's slaves, Old Dick, was tempted by the British promise of freedom during the Revolutionary War in May of 1778.³⁵ Occasionally, Tayloe's slaves resisted or tried to

³¹Richmond County Deed Book 14: 501.

³²This figure conservatively includes 75 slaves at Old House/Mt. Airy, and another 25 at the mine banks in Baltimore and Anne Arundel Counties, Maryland. Another possible way to estimate John Tayloe II's holdings in slaves is to extrapolate from the earliest slave inventories conducted by John Tayloe III. Beginning in 1808, John Tayloe III conducted annual inventories of the slaves all across his estate, and many of these records survive. As of 1808-1809, John Tayloe III owned 47 slaves at Old House, 10 at Marske, 54 at Gwinfield, 17 at Menokin, 106 at Mt. Airy, 47 at Hopyard, and 19 at Forkland for a total of 300 slaves on the Rappahannock Farms. John Tayloe III Inventory Book, 1808-1827, TFP, 6: 300-405. This figure does not include any slaves on the Maryland or Prince William County estates, for which the inventories are less frequent. In the 1770s, over 250 slaves resided on these latter two estates. Thus, an estimate for 500 slaves as John Tayloe II's slaveholdings is rough but likely.

³³Virginia Gazette, January 10, 1771, October 17, 1771.

³⁴John Tayloe as quoted in Mullin, Flight and Rebellion, 24.

³⁵John Walker Account in John Tayloe Account Book, 1776-1786, TFP, 2: 310.

improve their situation in other ways. In early 1770, slave Toby was convicted of stealing hogs in King George County. While awaiting trial, he was whipped and pilloried. He died from severe frostbite shortly thereafter. Tayloe was compensated £70 for his loss.³⁶ Such cases are rare in the records for Mt. Airy. Tayloe seems to have been a well-intentioned master. He regularly provided his slaves with jackets, pants, shirts, dresses, shoes, stockings, and blankets. It is probable that the presence of skilled slave clothmakers and shoemakers at Mt. Airy made providing for the slaves a less expensive and therefore more frequent occurrence. When slaves became sick, Tayloe provided them with additional rations and hired a nurse to “attend the people.”³⁷

A few anecdotes highlight the “invisible” culture of the Mt. Airy slaves. In the freedom that night and weekend hours provided and at other times when owners and overseers were unaware, slaves created a world based in the quarters that centered around friends and family. When entertaining, Tayloe frequently put his slaves’ musical talents to use. One commentator remembered that Tayloe had “a band of trained musicians chosen from among his servants, [that] were among the sources of enjoyment provided by his lavish hand.”³⁸ Certainly, these same slaves provided the entertainment in the quarters. To Tayloe’s annoyance, the nightlife of the slaves was not confined to their home plantation. Tayloe complained to neighbor Landon Carter that “my people are rambleing about every night.” Tayloe apparently caught his man Billie returning from Carter’s one March night. Tayloe reported, “so . . . the Entertainment was last night at

³⁶Kennedy, Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1770-1772, 49, 75.

³⁷Stephen Loyde and John Tayloe Account Book, 1708-1778.

³⁸Edward Dickinson Tayloe Scrapbook, VHS, MssIT2114a45.

Sabine Hall, & may probably be at Mt. Airy this night, if my discoverys do not disconcert the Plan.”³⁹ At least one slave had a curious mind and a good sense of humor. The Virginia Gazette reported that, during what must have been an unusually hot Virginia summer in 1766, Tayloe’s gardener “being very sensible of the intense Heat, by Way of Experiment, put an Egg on the Freestone Pedestal of a Statue in the Garden.” After four hours, the egg was roasted; the gardener reported that it was cooked through but tasted stale.⁴⁰

With the assistance of just over a dozen white overseers, managers, and craftsmen, Tayloe managed 500 slaves on 14 plantations spread across 40,000 acres in two colonies. The bulk of Tayloe’s managerial decisions had to do with agricultural concerns. Planter-businessmen had to consider issues such as annual crop cycles, long-term market trends, international wars, slave workforce composition, and production levels when making decisions about crops, labor, and other investments.⁴¹

Planting, tending, and harvesting a variety of crops consumed much of Tayloe’s time. What to grow, when to plant and harvest, how to recover from damaging weather, and whether to try something new were all decisions Tayloe confronted almost daily. Tayloe’s main crop on the Rappahannock plantations was tobacco, which he annually

³⁹John Tayloe to Landon Carter, Sabine Hall, March 31, 1771, Easter Sunday, Carter Family Papers, VHS, Mss 10: No. 40. Thomas Jefferson had similar problems with his slaves. See, Stanton, Slavery at Monticello, 39.

⁴⁰Virginia Gazette, September 5, 1766.

⁴¹Christine Daniels, “Gresham’s Laws: Labor Management on an Early-Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Plantation,” Journal of Southern History 62 (May 1996), 209; Gregory Stiverson, “‘Gentlemen of Industry, Skill, and Application’: Plantation Management in Eighteenth Century Virginia,” Research Report Series (Williamsburg, Va., 1975), 89-90; Lorena Walsh, “Plantation Management in the Chesapeake,” Journal of Economic History (49) (1989); Lois Green Carr, Robert Cole’s World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland (Chapel Hill, 1991), *passim*.

planted and harvested for sale to British merchants. Tobacco required year-round attention. In January and February, slaves prepared the seed beds that produced the seedlings for planting. Between March and May, the whole slave labor force worked making hills for planting and transplanting the seedlings to the prepared fields. These activities made the spring one of the busiest times of the entire year. During the summer, the plants required constant weeding, worming, and topping in preparation for September's harvest. The tobacco was then dried, prepared for market, and packed in huge barrels called hogsheads during October and November. December concluded the cycle with shipping the hogsheads to market, and unless they were required to roll the hogsheads to the shipping point, provided slaves with a brief respite from constant field labor. During the winter months, slaves tended to a variety of other tasks around the plantation, such as repairing fences, pruning fruit trees, slaughtering livestock, chopping firewood, and making cider.⁴²

Between 1750 and 1770, Tayloe sold to British merchants about 50-100 hogsheads of tobacco per year. While the account records are not complete, they are indicative of the scope of his tobacco-planting activities. During the 1750s, Tayloe sold 764 hogsheads of tobacco worth £4410 sterling (see Table 6). During the 1760s, those amounts increased to 930 hogsheads worth £6236 sterling. Between 1770 and 1774, the years for which his records are least complete, Tayloe sold a minimum 159 hogsheads valued at £611 sterling.⁴³ Tayloe wisely divided his annual shipments of tobacco among

⁴²Carr, Robert Cole's World, Chapter 3; T. H. Breen, Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of the Revolution (Princeton, 1985), 46-58.

⁴³John Tayloe II Account Book, 1749-1768, TFP, 2: 179-214; John Tayloe II Ledger, 1747-1787, Library of Virginia (hereafter LVA; this is a copy of the 1749-1768 account book but with some additional entries

multiple ships and merchants to protect himself against losses. At least eight times between 1757 and 1774, some portion of Tayloe's annual tobacco crop was lost at sea due to either piracy or shipwrecks and had to be written off.

The Rappahannock plantations were situated in Virginia's Northern Neck, an Oronoco-tobacco-growing area where planters had added wheat and corn to their market crop mixes as early as the second quarter of the eighteenth century.⁴⁴ For example, Landon Carter regularly grew wheat as early as 1756. The following year he harvested 347.5 bushels of wheat and "erect[ed] the Kiln (for drying the wheat and preventing it from rotting)." Corn and oats were other grains Carter incorporated into his annual crop mix. George Washington planted similarly. Located north of Carter and Tayloe in Fairfax County, Washington planted crops of wheat, barley, and rye at Mount Vernon as

made by Tayloe's executors); Accounts, Bonds, Orders, 1756-1762, TFP, 56: 392-427; John Tayloe II Account Book, 1770-1776, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS. These account books reference many other account books which apparently no longer exist.

⁴⁴There has been much historiographical disagreement regarding the point at which wheat became a significant secondary crop in Virginia and its impact on Virginia's society, economy, and slavery. The following scholars support a pre-1750 date of significance for wheat: Walsh, "Plantation Management in the Chesapeake," 396-397, 402; Bushman, "Markets and Composite Farms in Early America," 355, 358; Peter V. Bergstrom, "Markets and Merchants: Economic Diversification in Colonial Virginia, 1700-1775," unpublished dissertation, University of New Hampshire, 1980, 138-139; William H. Siener, "Economic Development in Revolutionary Virginia: Fredericksburg, 1750-1810," unpublished dissertation, The College of William and Mary, 1982, 14-15; Marc Egnal, "The Economic Development of the Thirteen Continental Colonies, 1720 to 1775," *WMQ* 3d Ser., 32 (2) (April 1975), 213; Stiverson, "'Gentlemen of Industry,'" 99-116; Gerald W. Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (London, 1972), 125; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 120; Breen, *Tobacco Culture* (Princeton, 1985), 160-161; Christopher Phillips, *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860* (Urbana, Ill., 1997), 10-11; Harold B. Gill, Jr., "Cereal Grains in Colonial Virginia," Research Report Series, (Williamsburg, Va., 1974), 7-9; David Klingaman, "The Significance of Grain in the Development of the Tobacco Colonies," *Journal of Economic History* XXIX (1969), 270; Daniels, "Gresham's Laws," 207, 217-220; Thomas Berry, "The Rise of Flour Milling in Richmond," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (hereafter *VMHB*) 18 (October 1970), 387-388; John F. Hart, "The Maryland Mill Act, 1669-1766: Economic Policy and the Confiscatory Redistribution of Private Property," *American Journal of Legal History* 39 (January 1995), 16; Paul G. E. Clemens, "The Operation of an Eighteenth-Century Tobacco Plantation," *Agricultural History* 44 (July 1975), 525. Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman provide a good discussion of the changes in the wheat market between the 1740s and 1770s; see Earle and Hoffman, "Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South," 28-39.

early as 1760.⁴⁵ Since Tayloe's agricultural records are incomplete, it is difficult to ascertain precisely when he began planting significant crops of wheat, corn, and other grains. The existence of grist mills on the estate of John Tayloe I proves that at least some level of grain processing regularly took place as early as the 1720s.⁴⁶ Grains comprised part of Tayloe's crop mix at least by 1755, when he recorded in an account book that he sold 400 bushels of oats and numerous smaller quantities of corn to surrounding neighbors. In 1762, Tayloe reported to Landon Carter that "the corn looked very bad the Tobo. was all cut . . . & the wheat was then sowing."⁴⁷ Two years later, Carter recorded in his diary that Tayloe, like most other planters in 1764, was complaining about the damage rain caused to the size and quality of his wheat crop.⁴⁸ Certainly by the 1760s and 1770s, wheat was a regular and important part of Tayloe's annual agricultural routine. For example, in 1767, Tayloe purchased the Landsdown estate from the Carters which included a mill he intended to use "for wheat." In 1771, Tayloe ordered Thomas Lawson, his manager at the Neabsco Ironworks, to build a "new merchant mill" in expectation of future "good crop[s] of wheat."⁴⁹ These marked, at a minimum, the fourth and fifth grist mills Tayloe built or added to his holdings.⁵⁰

⁴⁵Landon Carter Diary, 1: 127, 139, 186 (quote), 187; John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., The Diaries of George Washington (New York, 1925), 1: 148, 149, 153; Breen, Tobacco Culture, 160, 177.

⁴⁶Beverly Fleet, comp., ed., Virginia Colonial Abstracts (hereafter VCA) (Richmond, 19--), 17: 125.

⁴⁷John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, to Colo. Landon Carter, October 16, 1762, Carter Family Papers, VHS. See, for example, John Tayloe Ledger, 1747-1787, 2; Miscellaneous Accounts, 1755-1882, TFP, 6: 681.

⁴⁸Landon Carter Diary, 1: 275.

⁴⁹John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, to Robert Wormeley Carter, March 20, 1767, Carter Family Papers, VHS; Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, December 2, 1771, File 171.

⁵⁰Berry, "The Rise of Flour Milling," 387-388, argues that the expansion of wheat acreage correlated to increased numbers of milling facilities.

Between 1770 and 1775, Tayloe produced an average of over 900 bushels of wheat and corn each per year.⁵¹

Grain crops meshed nicely with tobacco's agricultural schedule. Wheat, oats, and barley were sown between the late fall and early spring and harvested in June or July, bracketing the busiest part of the tobacco-planting season--the transplanting of the seedlings. These crops required little attention during the growing season and could be processed after the fall harvest of the tobacco crop. Corn required more attention, but could be worked in conjunction with tobacco. Corn required hills for planting like tobacco as well as regular weeding. Slaves therefore often performed similar tasks to prepare and maintain both crops. The corn crop was then harvested in late September or early October while the tobacco crop dried.⁵²

By the middle of the eighteenth century, a variety of factors had coalesced to convince Virginia planter-businessmen of the wisdom of mixed commercial agriculture. Diminishing tobacco returns throughout the decades prior to the Revolution encouraged planters to seek other opportunities. In addition, European demand and competitive prices abroad provided planters with incentives to invest part of their acreage in grains. Planters quickly learned that profits could be made in the international grain trade.⁵³

⁵¹Stephen Loyde and John Tayloe Account Book.

⁵²See, Carr, Robert Cole's World, Chapter 3; Gill, "Cereal Grains," 22, 31-45, 49-54.

⁵³Walsh, "Plantation Management in the Chesapeake," 394, 396; Bushman, "Markets and Composite Farms in Early America," 358, 369; Gill, "Cereal Grains," 9; Siener, "Economic Development in Revolutionary Virginia," 14-15; Bergstrom, "Markets and Merchants," 139; Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves, 120; Earle and Hoffman, "Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South," 28-31; Stiverson, "Gentlemen of Industry," 99-116; Thomas M. Preisser, "Alexandria and the Evolution of the Northern Virginia Economy, 1749-1776," VMHB 89 (1981), 289; David Klingaman, "The Significance of Grain in the Development of the Tobacco Colonies," 271-277.

Furthermore, wheat was on average a less demanding staple crop. It could be grown on land far less fertile than that which tobacco required, and it needed less attention while growing. In the older Tidewater areas, tobacco was steadily leaching the nutrients out of the lands, and planters found that wheat could often grow more profitably on those exhausted lands than tobacco.⁵⁴

Planters, especially in the Northern Neck, on the Eastern Shore, and in western Virginia, therefore dedicated more of their lands to grain cultivation and steadily withdrew their reliance on tobacco monocrop agriculture around mid-century. As early as 1730, Governor Gooch reported that “the quantity of wheat and Indian [corn] exported is very great, of the former from 10,000 to 20,000 bushels in a Year, and the latter double the number.”⁵⁵ During the 1750s, bad crop years in Europe energized the grain trade, and by 1760 Virginia exported 40,000 bushels of wheat and 136,000 bushels of corn a year. Furthermore, Virginia exported a considerable amount of grains to the northern colonies during the 1760s by way of the coastwise trade. By 1774, the colony annually exported approximately 600,000 bushels of wheat--more than Pennsylvania and Maryland combined.⁵⁶ Wheat was therefore a major export staple in Virginia before the American Revolution. During the 1760s, at least 5% of planters’ annual income came from sales of

⁵⁴Stiverson, “Gentlemen of Industry,” 109; Walsh, “Plantation Management in the Chesapeake,” 394, 396.

⁵⁵Governor Gooch, 1730, as quoted in Gill, “Cereal Grains,” 8. See also John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, The Economy of British America, 1607-1789 (Chapel Hill, 1985), 132; Klingaman, “The Significance of Grain,” 272.

⁵⁶Gill, “Cereal Grains,” 9-11; McCusker and Menard, The Economy of British America, 130, 132; Klingaman, “The Development of the Coastwise Trade of Virginia in the Late Colonial Period,” VMHB 77 (1969), 30; Klingaman, “The Significance of Grain,” 272, 275; Jackson Turner Main, The Sovereign States, 1775-1789 (New York, 1973), 12, 39; Earle and Hoffman, “Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South,” 37.

grain, and that proportion increased to 10% by 1770.⁵⁷ Tayloe seemed convinced of the wisdom of mixed commercial agriculture. In addition to his regular planting of significant crops of tobacco, wheat, and corn, Tayloe regularly experimented with crops such as flax, oats, timothy grass, and duck grass. Landon Carter followed Tayloe's lead in 1776. He sent one of his slaves to Mt. Airy to fetch duck grass seed since Tayloe "sowed it on his poorest land and obtained a vast crop." Sales of pork and beef from his large herds of livestock—the grass crops provided grazing for cattle—also brought Tayloe a small but regular income.⁵⁸

The introduction of wheat and other grains spurred several significant developments in pre-revolutionary Virginia. Corn and wheat were staples with considerable spread effects or linkages. In other words, grains required many more people and services to process, package, and transport them than did tobacco. The result was a more diversified economy that could better withstand the shock of economic contraction. Corn and wheat had to be ground into meal and flour using water-powered grist mills, the most sophisticated and technically advanced source of mechanical power known to the eighteenth-century world. Mills tied the lumbering and grain businesses together, since grain was stored in wooden barrels for shipping and since grist and saw mills—both of which were powered by water—were often located on the same site.⁵⁹ In

⁵⁷Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves, 120.

⁵⁸Miscellaneous Accounts; John Tayloe Account Book, 1749-1768; John Tayloe Account Book, 1776-1786; Landon Carter Diary, 2: 1053 (quote).

⁵⁹McCusker and Menard, The Economy of British America, 23-25, 323, 325; Berry, "The Rise of Flour Milling," 390; Siener, "Economic Development in Revolutionary Virginia," 22, 24-25; Louis Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall: A Virginia Planter of the Eighteenth Century (Charlottesville, Va., 1965), 178.

this way, grains helped fuel the process of diversification in Virginia that began during the first three decades of the eighteenth century. As industrial advocate Tench Coxe understood, grain agriculture promoted manufacture and industry among farmers. He explained, “the union of manufactures and farming is found to be convenient on the grazing and grass farms, where parts of almost every day, and a great part of the year, can be spared from the business of the farm, and employed in some mechanical, handycraft, or manufacturing business.”⁶⁰ Coxe’s 1794 description of New England and Mid-Atlantic farmers applied equally to the management of plantations in the South before the Revolution.

The move towards grains and away from tobacco required planters to find alternate profitable ways to use their slaves’ time. While tobacco required year-round attention, wheat and other grains did not. Therefore, as planters shifted greater amounts of their acreage into grains, they required less field work from their slaves. This availability of slave labor time further fueled entrepreneurialism and diversification. Planters had to keep all hands busy at all times in order to maintain their profitability. Many slaves began to specialize in a variety of plantation craft industries, while others learned new skills in more complex industries such as ironmaking, shipbuilding, and textiling. While some planters began hiring out or selling their excess slave population, most planter-businessmen readily created new enterprises or found new tasks to which they assigned their slaves.⁶¹

⁶⁰Tench Coxe as quoted in T.H. Breen, “Back to Sweat and Toil: Suggestions for the Study of Agricultural Work in Early America,” Pennsylvania History 49 (1982), 250.

⁶¹Ralph V. Anderson and Robert Gallman, “Slaves as Fixed Capital: Slave Labor and Southern Economic Development,” Journal of American History 44 (June 1977), 29; Daniels, “Gresham’s Laws,” 217-218;

Putting slaves to work in a variety of industries was precisely the path that John Tayloe chose. The Tayloe family historically owned large numbers of slaves, so a significant part of the Tayloe slaves had always engaged in skilled craft or industrial work. In an earlier era of diversification, John Tayloe I had founded the Neabsco Ironworks, which eventually included 100 slave ironworkers.⁶² Not only did the younger Tayloe inherit the Neabsco Ironworks from his father; he also was the driving force behind the Occoquan Iron Company, in which he invested and ultimately acquired in the mid-1750s.⁶³ The timing of Occoquan was more than coincidental--as Tayloe began diversifying his agricultural endeavors, he found himself better able to channel energy and resources into other business opportunities like Occoquan. Of Tayloe's 500 slaves, more than one-third labored for his iron companies in Prince William County by the 1770s. William Lawson, clerk at Neabsco during the late-1770s, recalled that slaves labored on the iron plantation in every skilled and semi-skilled capacity:

[F]ourteen Wood cutters besides white men hired at different times, Six colliers . . . five blacksmiths[,] two ship Carpenters, two Wheelwrights, two Coopers, two shoemakers, one tanner[,], three house carpenters, a grist Mill kept by a Negro, a Merchant Mill kept by a hired Miller and a Negro, two horse teams and One oxtteam drove by negroes, six or eight hands employed in Manufacturing Cloth and linnen . . . [and] a Schooner navigated by five hands . . . [plus] hands [that] were employed at the Mine

Mullin, Flight and Rebellion, 125; Walsh, "Plantation Management in the Chesapeake," 394, 396; McCusker and Menard, The Economy of British America, 127; Lucia Stanton, Slavery at Monticello (Richmond, Va., 1993), 24.

⁶²John Tayloe I Estate Inventory.

⁶³John Ballendine to John Tayloe, May 13, 1756, TFP, 54: 1034-1035; Tayloe and Thornton Land Lists, TFP, 5: 153; Prince William County Deed Book P: 201-210; Maryland Gazette, November 25, 1756; David Curtis Skaggs, "John Semple and the Development of the Potomac River Valley, 1750-1773," VMHB 92 (3) (1984), 288-290.

bank in digging [sic] ore, hauling it to the landing and working the plantation there.⁶⁴

Tayloe's ironworks were dependent upon the skills and know-how of his slaves.

Furthermore, both men and women performed vital functions on the iron plantations. As early as 1747, 40 women worked at Neabsco and the Maryland mine banks, while 25 labored at Occoquan by 1770. While slave men worked as founders, furnace keepers, fillers, blacksmiths, millers, colliers, miners, woodcutters, carpenters, and skippers, slave women worked as spinners, weavers, cooks, laundresses, dairy maids, and domestics.⁶⁵ In short, Tayloe easily found alternate profitable ways in which to employ his slaves at the ironworks.

Iron plantations were not the only locus of industrial or craft slavery on Tayloe's estate. A number of the slaves working on the various Rappahannock tracts, the center of Tayloe's agricultural activities, increasingly worked in a variety of other plantation industries. As with his agricultural pursuits, most of the evidence of Tayloe's and his slaves' craft activities comes from the 1770s. By the 1770s, and likely much earlier, Mt. Airy hosted active milling, shoemaking, clothmaking, and blacksmithing businesses. Mills existed on the Tayloes' lands from at least 1724, when John Tayloe I successfully petitioned to receive one acre of a Mr. Carey's Richmond County land on which to erect a

⁶⁴William Lawson Deposition, March 11, 1789, File 171.

⁶⁵Occoquan Company Inventory; John Tayloe I Estate Inventory. While no inventories exist for the ironworks in the eighteenth century that designate slave occupations, several nineteenth-century inventories are informative regarding slave occupations and the sexual division of labor at the ironworks. See "Working Hands Belonging to Neabsco," 1824, TFP, 27: 773; 1825 Neabsco Inventory, TFP, 6: 396. See also, Michael W. Robbins, *The Principio Company: Iron-Making in Colonial Maryland, 1720-1781* (New York, 1986), 91-92; Charles B. Dew, "David Ross and the Oxford Iron Works: A Study of Industrial Slavery in the Early Nineteenth-Century South," *WMQ* 3d ser., 31 (April 1974), 195; Samuel Sydney Bradford, "The Negro Ironworker in Antebellum Manufacturing," *Journal of Southern History* 25 (May 1959), 194-195.

FIGURE 6



**Mill stones used as a walkway at Mt. Airy
Photograph by the author**

water grist mill.⁶⁶ John Tayloe I had also purchased at least two other mills in Richmond County in 1739 and 1740.⁶⁷ The younger Tayloe inherited at least two of these mills in Richmond County, as well as two in Prince William at Neabsco.

Tayloe added to these holdings two more at Neabsco, one at Occoquan, and one at Mt. Airy. Tayloe's purchase of Occoquan in 1756 included a profitable sawmill, and in about 1761, Tayloe built a large-scale grist mill, known as "a merchants mill," at Neabsco.⁶⁸ For a toll, Tayloe offered the services of his merchant mill to his neighbors. In 1767, Tayloe bought the Landsdown estate, which was surrounded by other tracts he already owned, from Landon Carter. Landsdown had been Carter's home tract before he built Sabine Hall a mile or two downriver during the 1740s. Tayloe assumed control of the mill property in January 1768, and by that time "buil[t] a house for the Miller & put in another pair of Stones for wheat."⁶⁹ Finally, Tayloe erected a new merchant mill at Neabsco by 1771, as the older one began to fall into disrepair. The volume of business at Tayloe's various mills is difficult to discern. According to one estimate, the Prince William County mills made "not less than between £7 & £800" in profits during 1774 and 1775.⁷⁰ The Landsdown fulling mill regularly sold cloth to Tayloe's neighbors

⁶⁶Both Maryland and Virginia passed legislation in the 1660s allowing persons wishing to erect mills to petition for the land of someone who had water access but either did not build a mill himself or refused to sell the land. See Hening's Statutes, 2: 260-261; Hart, "Maryland Mill Act," 1-2, 7.

⁶⁷VCA, 17: 125; Richmond County Deed Book 9: 519-520, 10: 235-236; John Tayloe Bonds, TFP, 5: 65-66.

⁶⁸Travers Nash Deposition, March 1789, File 171; John Ballendine to John Tayloe, May 13, 1756, TFP, 54: 1034-1035; Occoquan Company Accounts, TFP, 2: 211; Special Report by the Commissioners, File 171; William Holburne Deposition, August 28, 1798, File 171.

⁶⁹John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, to Robert Wormeley Carter, March 20, 1767.

⁷⁰Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, September 24, 1775, File 171.

during the 1770s and 1780s. Ralph Wormley, Jr., made several purchases of “8 yards fine cloth” each in 1776. Richard Parker bought 31 yards from Landsdown in 1778, while Mann Page bought 46.5 yards of various types of cloth in 1781 for £128.⁷¹ All of these mills employed several slave millers.

As his activities at Landsdown suggest, Tayloe invested in a “Manufactory of Cotton, Wool & Flax” cloth. Tayloe always employed white weavers and fullers (workers who processed woolen cloth by moistening, heating, and pressing it) to run Landsdown and otherwise supplied the mill with a full staff of slave weavers and spinners. In 1770, Tayloe sought advice on replacing his current weaver, who “[had] a large family, & [was] a little addicted to indolence, & [was] not a fine workman.”⁷² Between 1777 and 1783, Tayloe (and his executors) hired at least four white men to supervise operations at Landsdown. Between 1777 and 1779, Lawrence McKinney (or McKinna) worked as a fuller for £36 annually. By 1778, Tayloe hired William Hendren for the weaver’s job. Hendren’s duties included “look[ing] after the Sundry hands Put under his care at Landsdown House, in the Branches of Manufactorying Flax, Spining & receiving Cotton & Wool, and . . . keep[ing] them constantly imployed to the best advantage as lies in his power for the Interest and advantage of Coll^o. Tayloe.” His contract instructed Hendren to also “work himself at the loom.” In return, Tayloe paid Hendren “Six hundred pounds Nett Pork, one bushell Salt, Six bushells wheat [and] as much Corn as him self, wife, & three children will Eat during the said term.” In addition, Tayloe paid Hendren’s personal taxes and allowed him the use of two of his milking

⁷¹John Tayloe Account Book, 1776-1786.

⁷²John Tayloe, Mount Airy, to Col. Baylor, August 14, 1770, John Tayloe Papers, VHS.

cows. In 1780, William Wilkie apparently replaced McKinney as the fuller, and received a salary of £150 paper money yearly through 1783. In addition, Tayloe also hired a weaver named James Cooper for his Essex County plantations between 1780 and 1782.

Slaves James and Israel worked as full-time weavers at Landsdown, in addition to an unknown number of female spinners who turned fibers into thread for weaving.⁷³

Slaves also worked in similar capacities at Neabsco and Occoquan. William Lawson reported that “six or eight hands [were] employed in Manufacturing Cloth and Linnen” at Neabsco, while William Holburne noted that “five or six female slaves, called spinners” worked at Occoquan. Ironworks manager Thomas Lawson regularly employed the spinners and weavers to make cloth, “Jacketts & Briches,” stockings, felt hats, and shirts for the slaves at Neabsco.⁷⁴ His purchases, in addition to those of Wormley, Parker, and Page at Landsdown, illustrate how Tayloe used his clothmaking business to provide a service to the surrounding community as well as for his own purposes on the plantation. In addition to clothmaking, a smaller number of slaves engaged in shoemaking. Tayloe regularly sold shoe thread and shoe leather prepared by his slaves at Mt. Airy, and Thomas Lawson personally hired the shoemakers on more than one occasion to resole shoes or make leather boots.⁷⁵

Blacksmithing constituted another plantation industry that employed numerous full-time slave laborers. Smithing and forging activities were a regular part of slaves’

⁷³Accounts and Labor Contracts in John Tayloe II Account Book, 1776-1786, TFP, 2: 307, 308, 327, 336, 352, 374.

⁷⁴William Lawson Deposition; William Holburne Deposition, May 10, 1798, File 171; Document No. 32, File 171.

⁷⁵John Tayloe Account Book, 1776-1786; Document No. 32, File 171.

work at the ironworks and on the Rappahannock Farms. Blacksmithing activities had been a regular part of the slaves' work regimen under the supervision of John Tayloe I. His 1747 estate inventory included an entry for "Black Smiths Carpenters & Joyners Tools" valued at £10.⁷⁶ Mt. Airy apparently evolved into the community blacksmithing center by the 1770s if not earlier, as small and great planters from surrounding lands in Richmond County regularly patronized Tayloe's shop. The Mt. Airy blacksmiths worked year-round, but tended to be busiest between February and June (see Table 1).⁷⁷ Tayloe's blacksmiths were talented craftsmen who performed basic tool making or repairing services as well as more intricate work on looms, chariots, guns, and cotton gins. Typically, the slave blacksmiths spent their days making and repairing plows and other agricultural tools, as well as shoeing horses (see Table 3). In the eight years (1773, 1775-1781) for which there are records, the Tayloe blacksmiths made or repaired 236 plows and shod 83 horses. They worked constantly to make or repair tools, such as hoes, axes, saws, shovels, files, chisels, wedges, spades, pitchforks, scythes, wheat fans, and irons. Less frequently, they made weapons such as tomahawks and bayonets, mended or made cast hollowware items, or performed mill work.⁷⁸ The image of slave men crafting weapons during wartime is a surprising one; however, most of the tomahawks and bayonets they made were for plantation regulars—overseers and white artisans who

⁷⁶John Tayloe I Estate Inventory.

⁷⁷This discussion of and all tables about Tayloe's blacksmithing activities at Mt. Airy comes from his accounts in the John Tayloe Account Book, 1776-1786.

⁷⁸George Washington's smith shop, which operated from approximately 1755 to 1798, similarly served as a community smithing center in which slave blacksmiths performed many of these same activities. See Dennis J. Pogue, "Blacksmithing at George Washington's Mount Vernon," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 46 (1) (December 1996), 5379-5381. Thomas Jefferson operated a profitable nailery at Monticello manned by skilled slaves. See Stanton, Slavery at Monticello, 22-24.

TABLE 1

**MT. AIRY BLACKSMITHING: SEASONALITY AND VALUE OF
TRANSACTIONS PER MONTH, 1773, 1775-1781**

<i>Month</i>	<i># of Transactions</i>	<i>Overall Value in £ Va. Currency</i>
January	70	31.7.1
February	74	30.6.6
March	66	40.18.8
April	82	48.18.0
May	100	43.8.7
June	87	36.11.8
July	57	19.5.10
August	34	13.12.5
September	46	20.5.6
October	35	57.11.3
November	40	29.15.4
December	38	17.2.11
not specified	15	55.15.7

TABLE 2

MT. AIRY BLACKSMITHING: AVERAGE AND TOTAL TRANSACTION
VALUES, IN £ VIRGINIA CURRENCY, PER YEAR, 1773, 1775-1781

<i>Year</i>	<i>Sum or Total</i>	<i>Average</i>
1773	0.2.0	0.2.0
1775	0.19.8	0.2.9
1776	73.6.5	0.4.11
1777	73.1.9	0.6.2
1778	126.17.9	0.18.9
1779	94.19.4	2.8.8
1780	71.2.11	4.3.8
1781	2.19	0.7.4

worked within the Mt. Airy Department. For example, Tayloe's manager Griffin Garland and Fork overseer William Greenlaw each purchased a tomahawk in 1776 and 1777. Head carpenter Robert Hall purchased both a tomahawk and a bayonet in April of 1777.⁷⁹ Manufacturing weapons was therefore a limited part of the blacksmiths' duties.

Eighty-six individuals patronized Mt. Airy's blacksmith shop during the period 1773 to 1781. Tayloe's customers included small farmer and tenant families such as the Garlands and Beales as well as gentry families such as the Lees, Carters, and Pages. Not surprisingly, Tayloe's immediate neighbors were among his regular customers at the Mt. Airy smith shop. William Brockenbrough was Tayloe's most frequent customer, patronizing the Mt. Airy smith shop 86 times in two years, 1776 and 1777, and spending £26.13.6 Virginia currency. Brockenbrough lived west of Tayloe's estate bordering the original Old House lands. John Belfield, whose lands sat across the Rappahannock Creek from Mt. Airy, required smithing services 14 times in the three-year period from 1776 to 1778, which cost him only £3.19.2. The Beale family of contiguous Chestnut Hall sought Tayloe's blacksmithing services 30 times between 1775 and 1779, spending a total of £44.10.1. Moore Fauntleroy and Landon Carter, who bordered Tayloe on the west and south, were among his most frequent customers, visiting the smith shop 47 and 27 times, respectively. Fauntleroy spent £37.15.1 in three years while Carter spent only £10.11.6 during the same period. Richard Neale, the Garland family, and Lindsay Opie concluded the list of Tayloe's adjacent neighbors. Neale purchased £5.6 worth of services in 30 visits over three years, while Opie spent £7.16.6 in 11 visits between 1776 and 1779.

⁷⁹ John Tayloe Account Book, 1776-1786.

The Garland family, which included Tayloe's trusted manager Griffin Garland, collectively patronized the Mt. Airy smith shop 88 times in four years spending £88.12.11.

Most blacksmithing services cost less than £1 Virginia currency (see Table 2). Tayloe made the most money at the smith shop in 1778, when he provided £126.17.9 worth of services. During that year, the average transaction value equaled about 18 shillings. Considering that his costs consisted mainly of slave labor time, most of Tayloe's annual income at the smith shop was likely profit, although the precise amount is difficult to determine. Tayloe's blacksmiths charged about two shillings to shoe a horse or between two shillings and £1 to mend a plow, depending on the amount of iron required to complete the repairs. Some tasks were more intricate, time-consuming, and costly. Mill work, the making intricate pieces like buckles, locks, or nuts and screws, and parts and assembly on carriages or carts tended to be jobs for which the blacksmiths charged over £1. Thus, the Mt. Airy blacksmith shop brought in a regular but generally small annual income.

Tayloe operated another enterprise at Mt. Airy that was as much pleasure as business. The Tayloes were widely known for their preeminence in matters of the turf--specifically in horse breeding and horse racing. Like many Virginia gentlemen, the Tayloe patriarchs enjoyed the sport, competition, entertainment, and social display that eighteenth-century horse races provided.⁸⁰ Tayloe's thoroughbreds frequently won the purses at races in Richmond County, Williamsburg, Yorktown, Fredericksburg, and

⁸⁰Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia*, 98-101, 118-119; T. H. Breen, "Horse and Gentlemen: The Cultural Significance of Gambling among the Gentry of Virginia," *WMQ* 3d ser., 1977 34 (2), 239-257.

TABLE 3

**MT. AIRY BLACKSMITHING: FREQUENCY OF BLACKSMITHING ACTIVITIES,
1773, 1775-1781**

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Making, repairing plows	236
Making, repairing various tools	141
Shoeing horses	83
Making, repairing hoes	71
Making, repairing axes	42
Repairing chariot parts	39
Mending locks	26
Making nails	22
Making looms and spinning wheel parts	18
Repairing carts, cart parts	18
Making, repairing pot hooks	12
Repairing gun parts	9
Making, repairing keys	8
Making, repairing fire shovels and tongs	8
Making tomahawks	7
Mending frying pans	6
Mill work	6
Making, repairing bayonets	5
Making cask hoops	3
Making, repairing hollowware	3
Repairing cotton gin parts	3
Mending candlesticks	2
Work on a coffin	1

Annapolis, Maryland. Landon Carter noted in his diary in April of 1752 that he “Went to a Race in York Town Where Colo. Tayloe’s Mare, Jenny Cameron, won the Purse.”⁸¹ Tayloe’s horse Traveller won £100 in a race in Williamsburg in the spring of 1766, while Hero took the £100 purse on the same track that fall. Belair continued Tayloe’s winning streak at Williamsburg during the spring of 1767, taking another £100 purse.⁸² Robert Carter’s tutor Fithian recalled a race in 1773 at the Richmond County Courthouse, “where two Horses [ran] for a purse of 500 Pounds . . . One of the Horses, belonged to Colonel John Taylor [sic], and is called *Yorick*--the other to Dr. Flood, and is called *Gift* . . . the Course was one Mile in Circumference . . . [and] *Yorick* came out the fifth time [around the course] about 40 Rod before *Gift*.” In 1774, Tayloe’s Single Peeper dominated the track in Fredericksburg, capturing a purse of £50.⁸³

Tayloe’s horses provided regular income in yet another way as well. Because of their fame in racing and lineage, Tayloe’s horses were sought to “cover” (mate with) numerous mares. Tayloe advertised the availability of such services as early as 1755:

IN the Hands of William Kidd, Running Groom to John Tayloe, Esq; of Richmond, the fine Bay Horse Childers, to cover this Season, at Two Guineas a Mare, Leap and Trial, the Money paid at the Time of covering, or Five Pistoles for a Foal . . . [he is] very lucky in getting Foals, almost every Mare he leaped last Season (which was the first of his Covering) being now in Foal--Childers was second at Beverley for a £50 Plate in June 1750, second at York August 1751, first, third, and second respectively in three heats at Beverley in May 1752, and second in each of two heats at Richmond in July 1752.

⁸¹Landon Carter Diary, 1: 91.

⁸²Virginia Gazette, April 25, 1766; October 24, 1766; April 23, 1767.

⁸³Fithian’s Journal, 24-25; Virginia Gazette, October 20, 1774.

In 1770, Tayloe offered the famous Yorick and Traveller for covering. Tayloe took Traveller to Williamsburg with him while attending to Council duties, and offered Traveller for “10s. the leap and 40s. the season.” Yorick, probably the more popular of Tayloe’s studs, was available for services until mid-June at Mt. Airy. “[A]fterwards, he will stand the remainder of the season at Gwynnfield, a plantation of the honorable John Tayloe’s in Essex County, *for the greater convenience of the Southern customers.*”⁸⁴

Tayloe’s advertisement demonstrates the extent to which he recognized horse breeding as a business enterprise with profit potential--and his account books provide further support. Between 1776 and 1779, Tayloe repeatedly recorded his horse-breeding activities. In 1776, Tayloe charged £18.10 for covering services provided by Yorick and Nonpareil. The following year, Yorick alone brought in £20.16. In 1778, Tayloe offered Yorick and Black Horse for covering and made £37.2, while in 1779 Yorick provided £14.8 worth of services. Indeed, Yorick provided stud services for at least 15 years, contributing a regular income to Tayloe’s estate in addition to the much larger sums he consistently won on the track.⁸⁵

Plantation industries were not Tayloe’s only business interests. Although his other businesses undoubtedly benefited from the financial security agricultural diversification provided, Tayloe, like his father, also worked and invested as a merchant. As early as 1743, the Bristol Company investors with whom his father had regularly worked had identified the younger Tayloe as a “Merchant” and given him their power of

⁸⁴Virginia Gazette, April 18, 1755; May 24, 1770; April 5, 1770, emphasis added.

⁸⁵John Tayloe Account Book, 1776-1786; Landon Carter Diary, 2: 1010-1011, 1017; John Tayloe, Mount Airy, to George William Fairfax, December 14, 1773, TFP, 5: 116-117.

attorney in partnership with his father.⁸⁶ In the 1750s and 1760s, Tayloe directed his merchant activities into investments in ordinaries and neighborhood provisioning. In 1752, Tayloe purchased for £600 an ordinary in Leedstown. His records from the mid-1750s indicate that Tayloe regularly sold household and food products such as cloth, molasses, brown sugar, cider, wigs, seed, chalk, rum, and whitewash to his neighbors. Throughout the 1760s, he marshaled provisions from across his estate for sale to his Mt. Airy neighbors, including beef, mutton, corn, wheat, salt, wool, lamb, and pork. Landon Carter repeatedly bought or borrowed from Tayloe's stock. In 1766 he purchased "loaf sugar 5 pounds 100 weight" from Tayloe, and in 1766 and 1771 he borrowed three bushels of salt to make butter and 20 pounds of coffee. In 1768, Tayloe offered Carter some chairs he received at cost. In 1760 or 1761, Tayloe established "a little retail store of Wet and dry goods" at Neabsco. As a means of enhancing his retail business, Tayloe apparently required that his wage workers at the ironworks receive their wages in credits at his store.⁸⁷

Tayloe would not invest in all types of merchant activities, however. In 1773, his London merchant friend William Lee apparently notified Tayloe about a good business prospect in the slave trade. Even though his father had been a noted and successful slave trader, Tayloe replied, "I am much obliged for your kind intentions respecting of Negro consignments, which however shall be sorry to be concerned with in such poor &

⁸⁶King George County Deed Book 2: 537.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 3: 477-480; John Tayloe Account Book, 1749-1768; Stephen Loyde and John Tayloe Account Book, 1708-1778; *Landon Carter Diary*, 1: 302, 545, 2: 1048; John Tayloe to Col. Landon Carter, Sabine Hall, January 3, 1768, Carter Family Papers, Folder 2, Earl Gregg Swem Library, The College of William and Mary (hereafter Swem); Travers Nash Deposition, March 1789, File 171.

hazardous times.” Tayloe worried that the slave trade business would be “at best . . . precarious.”⁸⁸

John Tayloe II also invested in numerous merchant schemes and industry-promoting associations. During the 1760s, Tayloe attempted to purchase 4,000 acres in Princess Anne County on behalf of himself, John Wadman, and others. John Wadman proposed “to make oil of Tarr, and fish oil . . . [and] mak[e] some experiments in salt and other things which may be useful to this Colony.” Unfortunately, Tayloe’s and Wadman’s attempts to establish fishing, salt, and tar oil industries on Cape Henry intruded upon local residents’ ideas that lands that had long supported a common fishing hole should not be patented for private use.⁸⁹ Whether or not Tayloe and Wadman persevered in their plans is unclear.

Similarly, in 1771, Tayloe spearheaded an effort to establish “a Patriotic Store.” He reasoned that the current import trade was “extremely prejudicial to the industrious planters, by unavoidably involving them greatly in debt, through the excessive price at which goods have for many years been sold.” To rectify “this evil,” Tayloe and a group of other prominent Northern Neck planter-businessmen proposed to create a store that they would operate in a way more advantageous to Virginians. The store’s directors, to be appointed by the subscribers, would purchase goods using the subscription funds; these goods would be sold at cost (or, rather, “with no other charge upon the real and

⁸⁸John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, to William Lee Esqr., Merchant in London, June 15, 1773, William Lee Papers, VHS.

⁸⁹John Wadman Petition, 1771, VHS. The disagreement over water rights in Princess Anne County in this situation was similar to the types of disagreements that occurred in revolutionary Rhode Island. See Gary Kulik, “Dams, Fish, and Farmers: Defense of Public Rights in Eighteenth-Century Rhode Island,” in Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude, eds., The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America (Chapel Hill, 1985).

bona fide first cost of them, than the necessary charges of importation, the expence of store keeping, the difference of exchange . . . and £10 *per centum* profit to those who advance the money"). To destroy the cycle of book debt in which planters increasingly found themselves, goods would only be sold for ready money or tobacco. Buyers would be limited to purchasing only those items "they will use to support their families" in order to assure the general availability of products. Tayloe figured that this endeavor required at least £6000 sterling in start-up capital and would require approximately five years to return a profit to investors. The outcome of Tayloe's proposal is unrecorded, but Tayloe felt strongly that it was a "most useful undertaking."⁹⁰

In 1774, Tayloe joined yet another industry-promoting partnership, this one "for the Purpose of raising and making Wine, Oil, agruminous Plants [herbs], and Silk." Working with the well-known Italian businessman Philip Mazzei, who was to act as a factor for the new company, the partnership intended to import "sufficient quantities of eggs of silk worms from Italy and Sicily," thousands of "vines which bear the best grapes" from Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal, and 4,000 "olive trees from Provence, Lucca and Nice where the best olive oil is made." Mazzei's duties included personally

⁹⁰ "Proposals for a Patriotic Store," *Virginia Gazette*, January 31, 1771. See Breen, *Tobacco Culture*, 161, 191-195, for a description of the Association movement of which this patriotic store was likely a part. Tayloe's involvement in this scheme is one of several pieces of evidence that refute the historical rumor that he was a loyalist. See Frank Courts, "A 'Quiet' Legacy: The Tayloes of Virginia," *Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine* 42 (1) (1992), 4857; "Character of the Leading Men & Descriptions of Places in Virginia Given to the Commander in Chief," 1775, Colonial Williamsburg Research Files, original in the Peter Russell Collection, Toronto Public Library; "Dunmore's Virginia Councillors," Colonial Williamsburg Research Files. Tayloe regularly and willingly assisted the patriotic cause through provisioning colonial militias. See "King George Property Impressment," *Tyler's Quarterly*, April 4, 1782, 55-56; Public Service Claims, Record Group 48, Essex County Court Booklet, 1779-1781, 12, LVA; *CVSP*, 8: 195; "Virginia Militias in the Revolution," *VMHB* 15 (June 1908), 92. Finally, he informed George Washington in 1776 that he believed "the hand of Providence presides over Us, for I trust you are defending a Righteous cause." John Tayloe, Mount Airy, to George Washington, February 6, 1776, George Washington Papers, Reel 35, Series 4.

inspecting the products at each of these locations before shipping them to Virginia as well as to hiring 50 farmers experienced in making silk, wine, and olive oil who were willing to relocate to the colony. The partners sold subscriptions for partnership into the company at £50 sterling each in order to fund the purchasing of the vines, trees, and eggs as well as the 4,000 backcountry Virginia acres thought necessary for the venture. Tayloe purchased one share, as did other prominent planter-businessmen including Peyton Randolph, George Mason, George Washington, John Page, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Nelson, and Charles Carter.⁹¹

Tayloe's interest in the Silk, Wine, and Oil Company possibly was heightened by another investment he had made much earlier in his business career. In 1751, Tayloe joined 13 other planter-businessmen in forming the Ohio Company, a land speculation company that had been granted "about Five Hundred Thousand Acres on the Branches of the Ohio and other Branches of the River MISSISSIPPI within the Colony and Dominion of Virginia."⁹² In 1774, the Silk, Wine, and Oil Company determined that the backcountry of Virginia near the Ohio River contained the climate and soils most suitable in Virginia to cultivating their new products⁹³; thus Tayloe may have seen a golden opportunity to link his two investments. Tayloe's participation in the Ohio Company was related closely to his investment in the Patton Association, another land speculation

⁹¹"Proposals for forming a Company or Partnership for the Purpose of raising and making Wine, Oil, agruminous Plants, and Silk," November 1, 1774, and "Outlines of a Plan for introducing into the Colonies of Great Britain on North America the different Products of Europe . . ." in the Adams Family Papers, Section 13, VHS.

⁹²Ohio Company Articles of Agreement, May 23, 1751, Business Papers, LVA. The Articles are reproduced in Alfred P. James, The Ohio Company (Pittsburgh, 1959), 205-211.

⁹³ "Outlines of a Plan for introducing . . . the different Products of Europe."

company, which had received a similarly vast land grant in the same region in 1749.

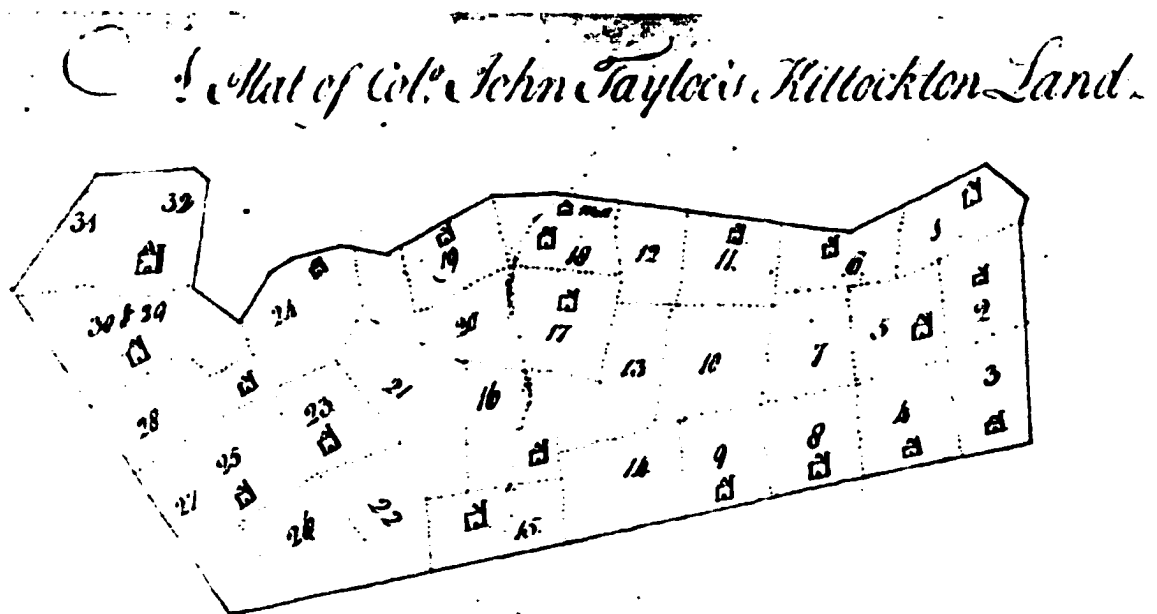
Both companies hoped to secure the inland Indian provisioning and fur trade. To that end, the Ohio Company established a storehouse at Rock Creek, Maryland, (present-day Georgetown), a camp and storehouse at Charlottesville (present-day Cumberland, Maryland) which included Fort Cumberland and an Indian school, and a series of smaller camps between Rock Creek and Cumberland where the Company hoped to settle recruited German immigrants.⁹⁴ Tayloe advanced the company funds as necessary for surveying, construction, purchases, and other expenses. In 1753, he paid for a small parcel to be surveyed at a cost of £10, while in 1774, he drew on British merchant James Russell to repay George Mason £100 “for surveying of the Ohio Company lands.” In a transaction that highlights precisely how Tayloe’s diversified holdings made further investing, enterprise, and diversification possible, Tayloe informed Russell that he would repay the draft shortly with a shipment of 40 tons of iron from his ironworks.⁹⁵

Tayloe’s investments in the Ohio Company and Patton Association were two instances of his large-scale land speculation. However, Tayloe regularly speculated in smaller tracts of land that he profitably resold or rented. The younger Tayloe had inherited from his father a 4,000-acre property in what became Loudoun County. Tayloe had named the tract Kittockton (or Ketoctan) Manor and, like other large landlords of the period, he subdivided it into 32 numbered lots containing about 150 acres each. By 1749,

⁹⁴Pamela C. Copeland, Five George Masons: Patriots and Planters of Virginia and Maryland (Charlottesville, Va., 1975), 1: 124-128; James, The Ohio Company, *passim*.

⁹⁵John Tayloe II Account Book, 1749-1768, 2: 182; John Tayloe to James Russell, March 25, 1774, Virginia Colonial Records Project (VCRP), SR01022, 1, originals in London Class Russell Papers, Bundle 17, Coutts & Co., Bankers, London.

FIGURE 7



A Plat of Colo. John Tayloe's Kittockton Land
Loudoun County Deed Book B

Tayloe sent an overseer named Ferdinand O'Neil along with 16 slaves to his backcountry lands to begin clearing and working them.⁹⁶ In 1756, Tayloe began renting the lots using three-life leases, and in the first year found tenants for 15 of the tracts.⁹⁷ Three-life leases extended rental rights to the longest-living of a husband, wife, and child. They benefited both the landlord and tenant in that landlords attracted tenants who realized the long-term security and stake that such rental terms gave them and their families in the land, and who therefore had an incentive to care for and improve the property.⁹⁸ By the 1760s, tenants had constructed houses on at least 23 of the lots, and Thomas Purcell had even built a grist mill. The moderate means of tenants generally meant that they were a stable and reliable population who would remain on the manor for decades. Thus, while some of the lots changed hands in the mid-1760s, Tayloe managed to keep most of the lots occupied between 1756 and his death in 1779. Tayloe generally charged a modest rent of 40 shillings payable each year in November to the Neabsco Ironworks, Tayloe's nearest property to Kittockton. Tenants were responsible for clearing their lands themselves and were required to build a house and other necessary outbuildings on the property. Tayloe also required in his leases that tenants return the property in good condition. He was

⁹⁶Hopkins, Index to the Tithables of Loudoun County, Virginia, and to Slaveholders and Slaves, 1758-1786, 139; Sweig, "Northern Virginia Slavery," 34. For a good analysis of tenancy and the leasing of large manor tracts, see Gregory A. Stiverson, Poverty in a Land of Plenty: Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Maryland (Baltimore, 1977).

⁹⁷Fairfax County Deed Book D: 269-286; Loudoun County Deed Book B: 229, E: 138.

⁹⁸Lorena Walsh, "Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder: Estate Management and Tenant Fortunes in Southern Maryland, 1640-1820," Agricultural History 59 (1985), 375-376; Stiverson, Poverty in a Land of Plenty, 10-11; Lucy Simler, "Tenancy in Colonial Pennsylvania: The Case of Chester County," WMQ 3d ser., 43 (1986), 557- 558; Perkins, "The Entrepreneurial Spirit in Colonial America," 175; Frances C. Robb, "Industry in the Potomac River Valley, 1760-1860," unpublished dissertation, West Virginia University, 1991, 23.

therefore more likely to choose men who were experienced farmers of sufficient substance who would be able to successfully cultivate the land, purchase their own tools and supplies, and pay their rents on time.⁹⁹ Annually, Tayloe made about £50 plus improvements on the Kittockton lands. In arranging the large Kittockton tract as a manor for leasing, Tayloe demonstrated his business savvy in identifying a small but lucrative source of long-term income.¹⁰⁰

The Kittockton tenants likely viewed their tenancy as a step towards becoming landowners themselves. While few records remain that allow any real insights into the life of the Kittockton residents, analyses of other large tenant populations in the eighteenth-century demonstrate that many tenant families and communities gained moderate and even significant wealth and social status.¹⁰¹ Typically, Tayloe's tenants rented a tract on a long-term lease, made improvements to the land in the form of buildings, orchards, and cleared fields, and were then able to participate in the export market based on commercial agriculture. Tenants planted tobacco, although by the middle of the century, wheat brought greater returns for those who made the shift. As mill owner Thomas Purcell demonstrates, some of the tenants also coupled their farming

⁹⁹Fairfax County Deed Book D: 269-286, D Part II: 401, 539, 639, 707, 709; Loudoun County Deed Book B: 229, E: 138, 187. See also Simler, "Tenancy in Colonial Pennsylvania," 558-559.

¹⁰⁰ In addition to the small annual income he derived from Kittockton, Tayloe may have held onto the tract as an investment he could give to his children at marriage or by will. Tayloe wanted to be sure that, in case his wife was pregnant with a son when he died, a sufficient landed estate could be passed on to the second son without dividing the Rappahannock plantations already bequeathed to John Tayloe III. This scenario, for which Tayloe prepared in his will, never materialized and the third Tayloe inherited Kittockton as well. See Will of John Tayloe II; Simler, "Tenancy in Colonial Pennsylvania," 561-562.

¹⁰¹ Simler, "Tenancy in Colonial Pennsylvania," 559.

with other business activities.¹⁰² Some tenants saved enough money to purchase their tenements from their landlord. Of Tayloe's two dozen tenants, one man, James McIlhany, proved a real success story. McIlhany rented lots ten and eleven between the 1750s and at least the 1770s. After two decades of tenancy, his years of hard work and saving paid off for him and his family. In March of 1793, this former tenant was financially secure enough to purchase the entire Ketockton tract—all 4,000 acres—for \$6,500.¹⁰³ McIlhany represents the fact that many tenants found these arrangements to be advantageous in facilitating their progress from yeoman farmers to planters.

Elsewhere, Tayloe rented out other smaller and independent parcels of land. When John Tayloe I bought 337.5 acres from Scarlet Hancock in King George County in 1745, Hancock required Tayloe to honor two existing leases on the lands. John Tayloe II upheld the deal, annually charging William Ficklin "800 pounds of good and lawful Tobacco & Cask" and Benjamin Fewell "950 pounds crop Tobacco and Cask" for 150 acres each.¹⁰⁴ Tayloe rented out two other tracts of 147 and 200 acres that he owned in Loudoun County to a pair of Loudoun County residents.¹⁰⁵ In 1771, Thomas Lawson struck a advantageous arrangement for Tayloe on some of his underused Maryland lands. Lawson reported that "I undertook in yours and Mr. Thorntons behalf to rent that plantation where the mine bank is consisting of 200 acres with its improvements and appurtenances for the space of nine years" at a total rent of £315 sterling. Lawson took

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, 545, 561, 567. Simler argued that the most successful tenants were the ones who diversified their business activities.

¹⁰³Fairfax County Deed Book D: 269, D Part II: 707; Adams.

¹⁰⁴King George County Deed Book 3: 115, 295.

¹⁰⁵Loudoun County Deed Book G: 215, 217.

care to ensure that the arrangement would not hinder the iron mining activities at that plantation and required the tenant to make repairs, build new buildings, keep a certain acreage in Timothy grass, and allow the miners 20 acres of pasturage. Lawson was “confident that the place [would] be of more than double the value” at the end of the rental term.¹⁰⁶

John Tayloe II furthered his father’s legacy of business enterprise and investment, land speculation, and agricultural diversification. In doing so, he was representative of the Virginia planter class of the pre-Revolutionary era. In planting tobacco, wheat, and corn, raised livestock, and extensively using slaves for fieldwork, Tayloe was a model Virginia planter. On the other hand, his activities as merchant, investor in plantation industries, promoter of industry in general, landlord, and land speculator show Tayloe to have been a dedicated businessman. Tayloe never saw these identities or roles as separate or independent however. Instead, Tayloe and others of his class perceived these activities to be part of one effort to provide economic security and stability in the face of constant market fluctuations and diminishing tobacco returns. The entrepreneurialism Tayloe demonstrated in constantly searching out and creating new business and investment opportunities alongside his more traditional agricultural activities was typical of the Virginia planter-businessmen. Such men lived and worked in a tobacco economy, but steadily created a culture that favored diversification of all types as the best means of achieving success within that economy.

¹⁰⁶Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, December 2, 1771, File 171.

CHAPTER III

NEABSCO AND OCCOQUAN: THE TAYLOE IRON PLANTATIONS

John Tayloe II took over the management of the Neabsco Ironworks during the 1740s, probably upon his father's death in 1747. Having already been sixteen when the works was established in 1737, the younger Tayloe was familiar already with its general workings and routines by the time he assumed control. Ironmaking was simultaneously the Tayloes' most risky and most lucrative business, and was also the enterprise that most challenged their managerial, technical, and business skills. In their ability to produce for market, profitably invest great sums of capital, withstand risk and temporary economic contractions, and operate some of the most advanced technology of the period, the Tayloes demonstrated the extent of their entrepreneurialism. Furthermore, Chesapeake ironmasters evinced their entrepreneurial ability by dominating the colonial iron industry during the pre-revolutionary era. Tayloe, like other contemporary ironmasters, ran his ironworks as an industrial plantation. As such, the institution of slavery was central to the business and part of what made Neabsco and Occoquan so profitable. Ironmaking was yet another endeavor in which slaves made Tayloe's entrepreneurialism possible. The knowledge, skills, and labor of Tayloe's slaves at his ironworks proved to be his most valuable asset and enabled the works to operate profitably for half a century.

The Neabsco Ironworks included a furnace, quarters for the workers and manager, and storage sheds for iron ore, coal, as well as other supplies and equipment. It

dominated 5,000 woodland acres watered by the Neabsco Creek, which flowed into the Occoquan Bay. Some of the necessary elements for making iron--ore, timber for charcoal, and fluxing agents--were not available on the Neabsco lands, so the elder Tayloe purchased ore banks in Baltimore County, Maryland. These were an integral part of the works. Floating the iron ore from the western shore of Maryland to Neabsco necessitated water-borne transportation; thus the works also included a full line of "Sloops, Schooners, boats and vessels" that had been built at Neabsco.¹ Thus, the "Neabsco Company," as his father called it in his will, was a burgeoning and intricate business when the younger Tayloe assumed control. However, Tayloe the younger recognized that the works offered other avenues for profit that his father had not explored. Soon, he added land, laborers, and other enterprises to the works which made it even more lucrative, and allowed him to engage in other entrepreneurial endeavors.

The colonial iron industry was made possible by Virginia's tobacco culture and constituted an integral part of that culture. Iron was essential for a number of crafts, including blacksmithing, construction, shipbuilding, and weapons production. While iron was necessary for the making of agricultural tools, ironmaking itself was an economic activity not directly linked with agriculture. Yet in the Chesapeake, tobacco cultivation helped facilitate the trade in iron because in many ways the two activities required similar conditions. Both tobacco and iron required extensive labor, provided in Virginia mostly by African and African-American slaves. Both generally were sold on credit to British

¹Will of John Tayloe I, 1747, Tayloe Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society (hereafter VHS), Reel 5: Frames 103-112. A large part of the Tayloe Family Papers at the VHS have been microfilmed as part of the Records of Ante-Bellum Southern Plantations, Series M, Part 1: The Tayloe Family. These papers will hereafter be expressed as TFP, Reel: Frame, to distinguish them from Tayloe family collections that are not part of the microfilm collection located at the VHS and other repositories.

merchants in exchange for other goods, and therefore required access to regular trans-Atlantic shipping. Iron and tobacco (and later, iron and wheat) were often shipped together in a symbiosis that lowered shipping rates on both commodities. Tobacco was a relatively light product, even though it was casked in large, heavy hogsheads. Iron was therefore used as ballast, or a stabilizing weight that helped control the draft of a ship.²

The Chesapeake annually sent tons of iron to England, and dominated the colonial export market in iron from the 1720s until the American Revolution. The Chesapeake's geographical circumstances coupled with the socio-economics of tobacco made the region more competitive in the colonial iron trade than northern colonies such as Massachusetts or Pennsylvania. Plentiful and accessible deep-water shipping, waterpower provided by falls, and abundant raw materials combined to make the Chesapeake the leading exporter of iron. Over a quarter of all ironworks erected in the British mainland colonies were in Maryland and Virginia, and by the 1730s, they annually exported more than 2,000 tons of pig iron.³ In fact, before 1750, the Chesapeake was the only colonial region to export significant amounts of iron to the mother country. For example, in 1737, the year the elder Tayloe opened his Neabsco Furnace for operation, Maryland and Virginia produced 91% of the 2,329 tons of pig iron the colonies shipped to England (see Table 4).⁴ In

²Michael W. Robbins, The Principio Company: Iron-Making in Colonial Maryland, 1720-1781 (New York, 1986), 3, 18; Keach Johnson, "The Baltimore Company Seeks English Markets: A Study of the Anglo-American Iron Trade, 1731-1755," William and Mary Quarterly (hereafter WMQ) 3d ser., 16 (1959), 40; David Curtis Skaggs, "John Semple and the Development of the Potomac River Valley, 1750-1773," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography (hereafter VMHB) 92 (3) (1984), 284-285. For a discussion of the impact of wheat on the shipping industry, see Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman, "Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South," Perspectives in American History 10 (1976), 35-36.

³Robbins, Principio Company, 193-195; Johnson, "Baltimore Company," 39n9; Arthur Cecil Bining, British Regulation of the Colonial Iron Industry (Clifton, N.J., 1973), 128-133; Ronald Lewis, Coal, Iron, and Slaves: Industrial Slavery in Maryland and Virginia, 1715-1865 (Westport, Conn., 1979), 11-12.

1733, the 2,309 tons of exported pig iron was worth a minimum of £6,411 sterling to the Chesapeake economy, trailing only tobacco and grains in overall export value. By the 1760s and 1770s, when export levels annually exceeded 5,000 tons from the Chesapeake, iron exports were valued at almost £30,000 sterling. However, most of the iron made in the Chesapeake remained there to be used by local forges or smithies.⁵ On the eve of the Revolution, the British colonies annually produced 15%, or about 30,000 tons, of the world's iron, with Maryland and Virginia responsible for the bulk.⁶

Tayloe's Neabsco Ironworks played a role in the Chesapeake's preeminence. The first John Tayloe established the labor pattern that predominated throughout most of the eighteenth century. Over 100 white wage workers, company-owned slaves, slaves hired from other masters, and indentured servants lived and worked together at Neabsco. Travers Nash, a clerk at the ironworks between 1755 and the 1770s, recalled that the works was staffed as follows: the blacksmith shop had four slave blacksmiths, the wheelwright shop employed "a man on wages and a slave to work under him," the two ore vessels were staffed by "white skippers on wages, [and] navigated by servants and slaves belonging chiefly to the Works," the two horse teams were driven by "a white man on wages and a slave," and the ox team by a slave. Slaves also worked as woodcutters,

⁴Robbins, Principio Company, 193-195.

⁵Lewis, Coal, Iron, and Slaves, 11; Skaggs, "John Semple," 284. The Iron Act of 1750 allowed pig and bar iron to be shipped duty-free to London, and was later expanded to include all English ports. However, the colonies were not permitted to manufacture iron into steel or other iron products. It is possible such restrictions on the development of planter-businessmen's entrepreneurial interests helped predispose them to Revolution, Robbins, Principio Company, 13.

⁶Robbins, Principio Company, 13; John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, The Economy of British America, 1607-1789 (Chapel Hill, 1985), 130-132, the figure £6411 represents only Virginia iron exports; Lewis, Coal, Iron, and Slaves, 11.

TABLE 4

PIG IRON EXPORTS FROM MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA, 1723-1755⁷

<i>Year</i>	<i>Exports Md. & Va. (in tons)⁸</i>	<i>Exports All Colonies (in tons)</i>	<i>% Exported By Md. & Va.</i>
1723	15	--	--
1724	202	202	100%
1725	137	137	100%
1726	263	295	89%
1727	407	484	84%
1728	643	886	73%
1729	852	1155	74%
1730	1526	1733	88%
1731	2081	2284	91%
1732	2226	2342	95%
1733	2309	2404	96%
1734	2042	2202	93%
1735	2362	2570	92%
1736	2458	2737	90%
1737	2119	2329	91%
1738	2112	2391	88%
1739	2242	2426	92%
1740	2020	2283	88%
1741	3261	3459	94%
1742	1926	2083	92%
1743	2816	3004	94%
1744	1748	1877	93%
1745	2130	2274	94%
1746	1729	1861	93%
1747	2119	2164	98%
1748	2017	2161	93%
1749	1575	1795	88%
1750	2508	--	--
1751	2950	3229	91%
1752	2762	2928	94%
1753	2347	2740	86%
1754	2591	3274	79%
1755	2132	3389	63%

⁷These figures were drawn from tables in Robbins, *Principio Company*, 193-195, and Bining, *British Regulation*, 128-133.

⁸Rounded to the nearest ton.

charcoal burners, founders, fillers, ore burners, and other laborers. When the second Tayloe assumed control, white skilled or semi-skilled wage workers held most of the supervisory and master craftsmen positions.⁹ Later, as Tayloe's slaves learned the necessary skills, they for the most part replaced the white artisans and craftsmen. Nash went on to recall that in addition to these fifty or so workers, two other quarters with "eight or nine hands at each with Overseers" also belonged to the works. These slaves likely were responsible for more traditional agricultural work. Since most of the rest of Tayloe's estate was so distant from Neabsco, the ironworks had to be able to produce many of its own foodstuffs in order to make the enterprise profitable. Finally, several dozen slaves resided at the "mine bank" in Maryland.¹⁰ The slaves there mined the ore, and then floated it on "ore flats" down the Chesapeake Bay to the Potomac River, and then up the Potomac River to Neabsco Creek.¹¹

Transporting iron ore over such a long distance was an expensive proposition, which was why John Tayloe I went to such great lengths to convince the Governor's

⁹Travers Nash Deposition, March 1789, Thomas Lawson v. John Tayloe's executors, File 171, Fredericksburg Court Records. File 171 contains a suit and countersuit between Thomas Lawson's and John Tayloe's executors over a large sterling debit entry Lawson made in the Occoquan Ironworks account books without Tayloe's knowledge and after he bought out his partner's interest in the works minus outstanding debts. Citations hereafter will read document name, date, File 171. John Tayloe Estate Inventory, November 2, 1747, Richmond County Will Book 5, 547-553. The 1747 inventory inventory includes 100 slaves (69 men, 31 women) and seems to indicate that Nash underestimated the number of slaves working at Neabsco in 1755.

¹⁰By the 1750s, Tayloe owned about 300 acres on the Patapsco River in Anne Arundel and Baltimore Counties, Maryland, from which he mined iron ore for the use of his Virginia ironworks. It is likely that his father had purchased these lands during the 1730s, as he petitioned the Virginia Council to allow him to import Maryland ore duty-free in 1737, however no deed evidence exists to pinpoint the precise date of purchase. In 1757, Tayloe had his lands resurveyed in order to combine three contiguous tracts into one piece of property named "Tayloe's Lot," which served as his source of iron ore. Baltimore County Certificates, Patented, May 7, 1757, Maryland State Archives (hereafter MSA), S1190-65, Folder 4818.

¹¹Ibid.

Council of Virginia in 1738 to relieve “himself and other Adventurers in Iron Mines” from port duties on iron ore imported from Maryland.¹² Highlighting the extent to which political position facilitated entrepreneurialism--both Tayloes served as members of the Council--the younger Tayloe lobbied successfully to renew this special dispensation during the 1750s.¹³ This ploy surely saved the Tayloes a great deal of money, as they annually imported more than a dozen loads of ore from Maryland, averaging about forty-three tons per load. In the mid-1750s, Tayloe II imported between 500 and 700 tons of ore annually.¹⁴

The works at Neabsco included two blast furnaces and water-powered grist and saw mills. The furnaces stood at the base of a steep hill, while the workers' quarters sat on a relatively level ridge a short way up Neabsco Creek. At some point, probably earlier rather than later, Tayloe ordered landscaping changes that created platforms to support the furnaces, as well as pit mines, trench mines, and a water collection pond. Archaeological investigations in the early 1990s found that a charge ramp, a bridge house or storage facility on the charge ramp, a small forge, road traces, and an ore roasting area all also existed on the site.¹⁵ The ironworks site was divided into two sections by Neabsco Creek. The forging, smithing, and other processing activities were conducted on one side of the

¹²H.R. McIlwaine, ed., Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (Richmond, 1925), 4: 433; William P. Palmer, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts (New York, 1968), 38: 387.

¹³Kathleen Bruce, Virginia Iron Manufactures in the Slave Era (New York, 1968), 18.

¹⁴“Ore Receipts,” 1755-1757, TFP, 56: 409.

¹⁵Carter L. Hudgins and Douglas W. Sanford, “Neabsco Mills Ironworks Site, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form,” Center for Historic Preservation, Mary Washington College, 1993, Section 7, 1-2. A copy of this form is also located in the Neabsco Furnace File, Tate Thompson Brady Papers, VHS. Only Phase I and II archaeological investigations have been conducted at the Neabsco Ironworks Site

creek, while the more central ironmaking and domestic areas were located on the other. The furnaces each measured about thirty to forty feet square, and the entire site covered an area of approximately eighteen acres.¹⁶

The Neabsco Ironworks was a typical colonial ironworks and used the ironmaking technology of the times. Eighteenth-century iron manufacturing was a two-step or “indirect” process. Iron ore was smelted in a blast furnace to produce rectangular chunks of pig iron about a half foot wide, four feet long, and weighing fifty or more pounds each. Pig iron was then converted to bar iron at a forge by a refining decarbonization process in which the pigs continually were heated and hammered until most of the impurities were removed. In a few cases, both processes were combined in a bloomery, where ore was made directly into a “bloom” of iron which was then converted to an adequate but lower-quality bar iron than that produced in the two-step process. A typical furnace consisted of a stack, hearth, water-driven bellows, and casting shed. The stack was generally pyramidal in shape, twenty-five or more feet high and about twenty-five feet square at the base. The stack interior was narrow at the top and bottom and wide in the middle or “bosh.” The hearth was a cylindrical reservoir into which the melted ore dropped and through which it was fed into sand molds in a casting shed.¹⁷

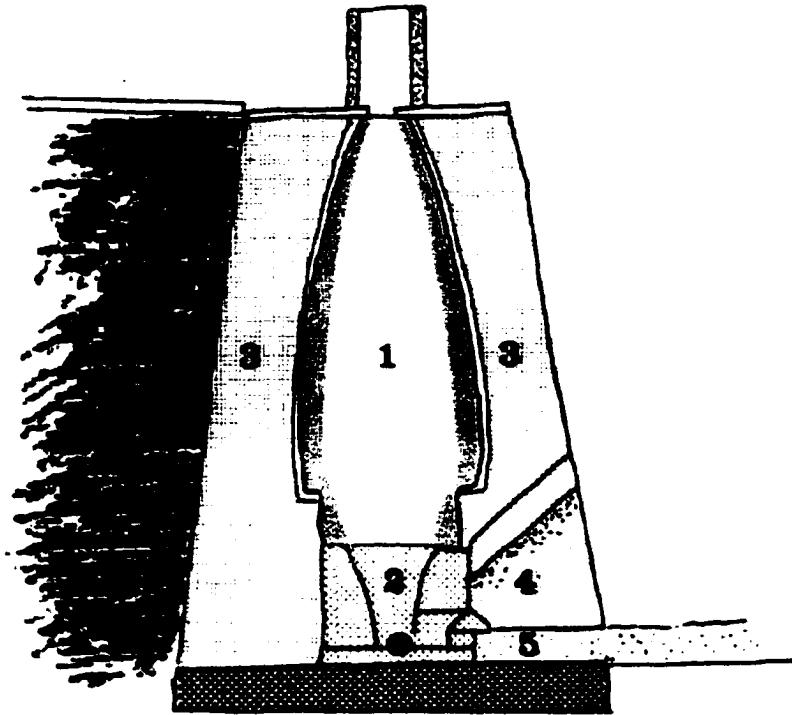
Iron manufacturing was a much more intricate process than this brief description portrays. Furnaces demanded huge amounts of raw materials. A typical furnace required

(44PW629), which is located on private property. The preliminary fieldwork indicated that the site maintained a high degree of archaeological integrity.

¹⁶Hudgins and Sanford, “Neabsco Mills Ironworks Site,” Section 7, 3-4.

¹⁷Skaggs, “John Semple,” 285; Heite, “Pioneer Phase of the Chesapeake Iron Industry,” 140; Robbins, Principio Company, 6.

FIGURE 8



Cross-section through a blast furnace:

- 1. Upper smelting area where the flux, fuel, and ore are combined.**
- 2. Hearth, where the molten iron settles.**
- 3. The stack.**
- 4. The work arch.**
- 5. The sand casting floor.**

From Edward Heite, "The Pioneer Phase of the Chesapeake Iron Industry: Naturalization of a Technology," Quarterly Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Virginia 38 (3) (1983), 163.

roughly half an acre of forest to make the charcoal necessary to produce each ton of pig iron, and the average annual production of a single furnace was often more than 400 tons. Put another way, an average blast furnace required three tons of iron ore and 300 bushels of charcoal every twenty-four hours as long as it was operating. These materials required considerable preparation before they could be put to use. Iron ore had to be dug from ore banks and roasted to remove impurities. Limestone for fluxing also had to be mined and stored. Acres of trees had to be felled and burned to make charcoal. Once the furnace was in blast, alternating layers of the necessary raw materials--charcoal, ore, and limestone (or oyster shells in the Neabsco case)--were loaded continuously or "charged" through the opening in the top. To melt the ore, the blast had to be maintained at a high temperature, most often accomplished by a water-mill-driven bellows. Melted ore dropped down into the hearth, and the fluxing agent worked to coagulate the ore's non-metallic impurities so they could be drawn off daily as a waste product known as slag.¹⁸

The molten iron was poured or ladled into molds to make cast iron objects, or channeled into a series of sand molds on the casting house floor to make pigs. Both products were marketable and profitable. Cast objects might include firebacks, stove plates, tools, hollowware, or weapons. Pigs could either be marketed "as is" or shipped to forges or smithies to be refined into bar iron for making nails, tools, chain, or a variety of other hardware. Bar iron was also marketable, provided it met the British government's regulations regarding "the sizes of IRON proper to be imported from America for his Majesty's Service." Iron manufacturing was labor- and capital-intensive.

¹⁸Robbins, *Principio Company*, 6-8; Keach Johnson, "Genesis of the Baltimore Company," *JSH* 19 (May 1953), 166; Heite, "Pioneer Phase of the Chesapeake Iron Industry," 141; William Reynolds, "An Account of the Albemarle Iron Works," *Albemarle County History* 50 (1992), 41.

The indirect process produced hundreds of tons of iron, but required night-and-day attention by a large crew of workmen for many months at a time. Shortages of any of the needed materials, lack of water power, or the breaking of any part of the hearth or stack immediately ended the blast.¹⁹

John Tayloe II understood the benefits and potential hazards of participating in the iron industry. In fact, his apparent confidence in his endeavors at Neabsco drew him to another nearby opportunity in the mid-1750s. In 1755, Tayloe and business associate Presly Thornton contracted with John Ballendine to establish and manage a new furnace on the Occoquan River in Prince William County on their behalf. Ballendine was an ambitious, business-minded man whose enterprises helped establish the small town of Occoquan, Virginia. Tayloe and Thornton invested in Ballendine's Occoquan forge complex and advanced him the money to purchase 280 acres on the south side of the river. Tayloe and Thornton bought almost 1,800 acres of land for £450 Virginia currency for the new furnace site during the spring of 1755. By 1756, both the Occoquan Furnace and Occoquan Forge were in operation; Ballendine believed that with the appropriate labor force, they could "make 1000 Tons of Piggs" from the furnace in addition to the "70,000 Ton of Anchonys [he made at the forge] since last Dec[ember]."²⁰

The arrangement among the three men was more difficult than any of them had probably imagined. Ballendine apparently kept expanding his forge complex until it

¹⁹Robbins, Principio Company, 8-9, 20-21; Edward Heite, "Pioneer Phase of the Chesapeake Iron Industry: Naturalization of a Technology," Quarterly Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Virginia 38 (3) (1983), 141; "An account of the sizes of IRON proper to be imported from America for his Majesty's Service," Virginia Gazette, April 27, 1769.

²⁰John Ballendine to John Tayloe, May 13, 1756, TFP, 54: 1034-1035; Tayloe and Thornton Land Lists, TFP, 5: 153; Prince William County Deed Book P: 201-210. See also, Skaggs, "John Semple," 288.

became a constant drain on Tayloe and Thornton who saw no immediate returns. As early as November of 1756, Tayloe and Thornton advertised in the region's newspapers that "John Ballendine is no longer agent for their Furnace at Occoquan," and advised readers "not [to] trust him on their account."²¹ The strained partnership apparently remained legally intact for several more years, until finally Tayloe and Thornton bought out Ballendine's interest in the whole estate. For a mere £150 Virginia money, Tayloe and Thornton acquired "the tract of land on [the] south side of Occoquan River in Prince William county . . . [with a] plantation house, the Occoquan Warehouse, and a forge containing 1,070 acres." In the interim, Tayloe and Thornton had added almost another 1,500 acres to the Occoquan Furnace. Once they cornered Ballendine into selling, they ended up with a huge furnace and forge complex with over 4,000 acres of land.²² Between his Neabsco lands and his half of the Occoquan estate, Tayloe owned almost 10,000 acres, or about fifteen square miles, of land along the Potomac River and inland between the Occoquan River and Quantico Creek in northern Virginia.

When Archdeacon Burnaby visited the Occoquan Works in October of 1759, he praised what he observed. "About two miles above Colchester there is an iron furnace, a forge, two saw mills and a bolting mill. . . . They have every convenience of wood and water that can be wished for."²³ While the complex seemed to be flourishing, disputes over its ownership and management continued. Ballendine apparently had brought in

²¹Maryland Gazette, November 25, 1756. See also, Skaggs, "John Semple," 289.

²²Prince William County Deed Book P: 7-8, 299-308; Tayloe and Thornton Land Lists, TFP, 5: 153; Anne Arundel County Deed Book BB 2, 629-631, MSA Land Records. See also, Skaggs, "John Semple," 289-290.

²³Archdeacon Burnaby as quoted in Fairfax Harrison, Landmarks of Old Prince William: A Study of Origins in Northern Virginia (Baltimore, 1987), 2: 428.

John Semple, another area ironmaster, in the spring of 1762, nine months before Tayloe and Thornton had bought him out. Thus, Semple claimed rights in the forge complex, which stood a quarter of a mile down river of the Occoquan Furnace. From time to time, Semple went out of his way to interrupt the work of Tayloe and Thornton's furnace, and he repeatedly turned down very lucrative offers for his interest in the works. Tayloe and Thornton contended that even though Semple knew that they had purchased the complex from Ballendine in January of 1763, he disregarded "our possession, [and] afterwards purchased the same of Ballendine, and became possessed thereof." In desperate straits, Ballendine had complicated matters further by selling the complex to yet another party, from whom Tayloe and Thornton were forced to purchase the works yet again. During the summer of 1766, Tayloe and Thornton warned the public about the status of the works and their situation: "LEST any persons inclined to purchase the lands and works on Occoquan river . . . and to prevent any pretence of ignorance of our right and claim thereto, we are induced to advise the publick that there is now of record in the Secretary's Office of this colony articles of agreement made between the said Ballendine and us, for the conveyance of the said land and works, where we were forthwith put in possession of." Anticipating further trouble from Semple, the pair cautioned *Virginia Gazette* readers, "If any will purchase of the said Semple after this notice, they will do it with their eyes open, and must stand to the consequences, as we are determined to assert our rights."²⁴ As late as 1771, Tayloe's manager, Thomas Lawson, could still lament, "I must

²⁴Virginia Gazette, June 13, 1766; Skaggs, "John Semple," 290. It is possible that others became embroiled in the conflict. In 1769, Thomas Tabb and Thomas Yuille placed a similar notice, declaring that they had purchased land and slaves from Ballendine in Fauquier, Prince William, and Fairfax Counties, and forewarning "all persons from making any purchase of the said lands or slaves." The slaves included a number of men with ironmaking skills. Virginia Gazette, November 16, 1769.

think that one day or other the Occoquan Forges must fall into your hands.”²⁵ John Semple and possibly another businessman were still at least partly involved in Occoquan. Indeed, Semple’s executors advertised the estate for sale after his death in 1788.²⁶

Undoubtedly these controversies annoyed John Tayloe, a man of self-proclaimed “positiveness in opinion.”²⁷ When Tayloe felt he was in the right, as he did in the instance of Occoquan, he could not be persuaded otherwise. It was in this spirit of persistence, self-assurance, and indignation that he began personally to manage the works at Occoquan despite the problems with Ballendine and Semple. The Occoquan Furnace, established in 1755, was located a half mile west of the town of Occoquan on the south bank of the Occoquan River. The Occoquan Forge, established several years later, was located in the village of Occoquan on the same side of the river.²⁸ While the furnace was located just above the river’s falls, the forge stood on “navigable waters,” allowing for the easy loading and unloading of supplies, ore, and goods for market.²⁹

The complex also included a grist mill, bolting mill, saw mill, bake houses, store houses, and dwellings. The main dwelling house, where Ballendine and later ironworks managers and clerks resided, included six fashionably furnished rooms. A hall contained

²⁵Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, October 27, 1771, File 171.

²⁶Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser, June 5, 1788.

²⁷John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, to William Lee, Merchant at London, June 12, 1771, William Lee Papers, VHS.

²⁸The archaeological sites of both the furnace and forge have been identified. The furnace remains (44PW605) are located on the present county reservoir property immediately west of Occoquan. No above-ground remains of the forge (44PW606) are visible, but the documentary evidence proves its location was in the old mill complex at the west end of the town. No excavations have been conducted at either site.

²⁹Virginia Herald and Fredericksburg Advertiser, June 5, 1788; Occoquan Forge and Furnace Files, Tate Thompson Brady Papers, VHS.

a large walnut table that seated twelve and was set with “Chaina” bowls, tea pots, and coffee cups, as well as stoneware plates, wine glasses, brass candlesticks, and knives and forks. Under Tayloe’s and Thornton’s management, at least five of his salaried workers resided in the house, three of whom shared one bedroom. One old and one new dairy, a storage cellar, a granary cellar, and a slave quarter on the “Mourmsco” Creek also stood on the property. The company also owned teams of horses as well as cattle, oxen, and pigs.³⁰

While Presly Thornton contributed capital and likely some advice to the partnership, Tayloe was the more active partner in the daily management. Indeed, Tayloe essentially ran the two iron companies, Neabsco and Occoquan, as one operation. The two ironworks shared supplies and sometimes laborers and received their ore from the same Maryland mines. Tayloe often marketed their products without distinguishing in his accounts at which of the two furnaces they had been manufactured.³¹ To further complicate matters, from one year to the next Tayloe’s bookkeepers rarely closed out the ironworks’ accounts (not doing so was a common eighteenth-century accounting practice), and therefore it became more difficult over time to untangle the business of one

³⁰Occoquan Company Inventory, March 4, 1771, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library (hereafter CWF).

³¹The following discussion of the business operations of Neabsco and Occoquan is based on the following (often incomplete) account books: John Tayloe II Account Book, 1749-1768, TFP, 2: 179-214; John Tayloe II Ledger, 1747-1787, Library of Virginia (hereafter, LVA; this is a copy of the 1749-1768 account book with some additional entries made by Tayloe’s executors); Accounts, Bonds, Orders, 1756-1762, TFP, 56: 392-427; John Tayloe II Account Book, 1770-1776, Tayloe Family Papers, Mss1 T2118g1, VHS; and, Thomas Lawson’s Occoquan Accounts, 1757-1785, File 171. These account books reference many other account books which apparently no longer exist.

works from the other.³² Indeed, when Tayloe's and Thornton's descendants asked one Richard Parker "to make a fair judgment of the accounts of the works so that they could make a bargain," he concluded that "the accounts of the two sets of works were so blended together that it appeared to me impossible to separate them."³³ Thus, any discussion of the business activities and operations of one works necessitates the incorporation of the other.

While the accounts of the two ironworks are incomplete, they do reveal the basics of the business as Tayloe ran it. First, one or both of the furnaces produced pig iron every year between 1754 and 1774.³⁴ Second, after the major addition of the second ironworks in 1755, Tayloe continued to add various enterprises to the two companies to make them more productive and profitable. Third, they were staffed by a combination of owned slaves, hired slaves, indentured servants, convict servants, overseers and clerks. Finally, documentary evidence reveals that Tayloe encountered and survived his fair share of troubles along the way.

The Neabsco and Occoquan Furnaces were both productive in manufacturing pig iron for market. Less is known about the operations of the Neabsco and Occoquan Forges, as few accounts survive. Existing receipts and accounts indicate that Tayloe

³²For more information about eighteenth-century accounting practices, see John Mair, Book-Keeping Moderniz'd; or, A Methodical Treatise of Merchant-Accompts; or, Merchant-Accompts by Double Entry (Edinburgh, 1736, 1773); W. T. Baxter, "Accounting in Colonial America," in A. C. Littleton and B. S. Yamey, eds., Studies in the History of Accounting (Homewood, Ill., 1956), 272-287; Albert F. Voke, "Accounting Methods of Colonial Merchants in Virginia," Journal of Accountancy 41 (7) (July 1926), 1-11.

³³Richard Parker's Deposition, March 20, 1790, File 171.

³⁴Correspondence and other evidence indicates that Neabsco produced pig iron from the late 1730s until the turn of the century and that Occoquan produced pig iron from about 1755 until the early 1780s. This discussion is then limited by the scope of existing account books, see note 31.

productively operated at least one forge between 1756 and 1774, and sold his bar iron to both local planters and British merchants.³⁵ While both furnaces operated for longer periods, representative years of operation under the second John Tayloe were from 1754 through 1774. Tayloe reserved some of his furnace's pig iron for the use of his forges, but exported most of it to England to be sold by English merchants with whom he regularly conducted business. Tayloe consigned his iron to at least nineteen different merchants during this twenty-year period, but most regularly trusted London merchants James Buchanan, John Backhouse, James Russell, Robert Allason, John Stewart, and John Jordan to look out for his interests and take care of his business. Occasionally, he consigned his iron to merchants in Bristol, Liverpool, Dublin, and Glasgow as well. To protect against shipwrecks and piracy, Tayloe usually divided his annual iron production between as many as fourteen ships, ensuring that at least most of his iron would arrive safely to England. Tayloe often marketed his tobacco and iron together, which was an advantageous arrangement for ships' captains as they could take on more tobacco with the iron as ballast.

Indeed, taking his two products together was a prerequisite for doing business as far as Tayloe was concerned. When he was once apparently refused in this matter, he was outraged. "[M]y Tob^o hitherto, so it ever shall, command fr[eigh]t for my Iron. I consider the advantage of Iron ballast to my Tobacco loaded ship . . . is greatly superior to any expense . . . therefore upon the whole I will not ship Tob^o in any Ship whose Owner disputes taking Iron freight free, as usual." Tayloe directed his correspondent, London

³⁵Occoquan Company Accounts, TFP, 2: 186, 196, 212; Handman Lancaster Accounts in John Tayloe II Account Book, 1749-1768; Receipts, TFP, 56: 394, 400.

merchant William Lee, to settle his account with merchant James Russell, as he intended to “withdraw my Correspondence for that reason only.” Tayloe was a fair but demanding business associate, and refused to be “thought unreasonable, or dictatorial.”³⁶

The per-ton prices Tayloe received for his iron fluctuated from one transaction to the next each year. Tayloe received the highest average prices per ton for his pig iron during the mid-1750s and late-1760s, while the early-1760s and 1770s proved less lucrative. These fluctuations seem to coincide with depressions in Virginia’s tobacco economy during these years.³⁷ One shipment of Tayloe’s iron commanded an all-time high of £7.12.10 per ton in 1759, while others brought a disappointing £3 to £4 per ton during the period between 1758 and 1760. On average, Tayloe usually received from £5 to £6 sterling per ton for his pig iron (see Table 5). This iron price pattern roughly coincided with fluctuations in the tobacco prices Tayloe received, which peaked in 1757 and 1769. During depressed years, then, iron functioned as an important hedge against the uncertainties and difficulties of the tobacco economy. While iron and tobacco prices generally were depressed simultaneously, the combined income Tayloe received in depressed years was far more than he would have received for tobacco alone.³⁸ When Tayloe’s tobacco brought only £4.16.10 per hogshead for 153 hogsheads he sold in 1763,

³⁶John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, Virginia, to William Lee, Merchant at London, June 12, 1771, William Lee Papers, VHS. By 1772, Tayloe and Russell had apparently come to some agreement, as Tayloe was again shipping his tobacco and iron to Russell.

³⁷Allan Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800 (Chapel Hill, 1986), 119; McCusker and Menard, The Economy of British America, 62-63, 121; Ronald Hoffman, A Spirit of Dissension: Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland (Baltimore, 1973), 18.

³⁸See McCusker and Menard, The Economy of British America, 119, 126-127, for a discussion of motivations for and the impact of diversification on the tobacco economy.

TABLE 5
AVERAGE PRICE PER TON, IN £ STERLING,
RECEIVED BY JOHN TAYLOE FOR PIG IRON, 1754-1774³⁹

	<i>Year</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>£</i>
	1754	5.17.0	1760	5.0.0	1765	5.7.0	1770	6.9.0
	1755	6.3.0	1761	4.10.0	1766	5.11.0	1771	—
	1756	6.12.0	1762	5.11.0	1767	6.0.0	1772	5.14.0
	1757	6.6.0	1763	6.14.0	1768	6.11.0	1773	5.14.0
	1758	4.7.0	1764	5.12.0	1769	6.4.0	1774	4.10.0
	1759	4.10.0						
5 Year Average:		£5.16.9		£5.10.0		£6.1.0		£5.11.9

³⁹Fluctuations in prices may partially be the result of incomplete accounts. For example, the unlikely £2 per ton Tayloe received for a 1758 shipment and the even more unlikely £11 he received for one in 1763 are probably the result of incomplete data.

he received £6.14.6 per ton for 214 tons of pig iron. His total income from both commodities that year reached just over £1957 sterling. Had Tayloe been dependent on tobacco alone, he would have made just £712 (see Table 6).

The prices Tayloe received for his pig iron between 1754 and 1774 were generally in line with those at other ironworks. Between 1728 and approximately 1760, Charles Chiswell and Alexander Spotswood operated the Fredericksville Furnace in Spotsylvania County, Virginia. During the 1730s, Chiswell advised William Byrd II on the conditions necessary to establish a successful ironworks. If Byrd followed his advice, Chiswell assured him, he could make 800 tons of pig iron per year and sell it for £6 sterling per ton.⁴⁰ Bigger operations, like the Baltimore Company of Maryland, could command even more for their iron. Established in the 1730s by five prominent planter-businessmen--Daniel Dulany, Dr. Charles Carroll, Benjamin Tasker, Charles Carroll of Annapolis, and Daniel Carroll--the Baltimore Company became one of the largest and most successful ironworks in eighteenth-century America. Initially, the Carrolls figured that an annual production of 500 tons bringing £8 sterling per ton would allow them to see a profit in just two years. However, £6 to £7 sterling per ton proved to be more realistic.⁴¹

Comparison with other furnaces is instructive regarding production levels. The amount of pig iron Tayloe's ironworks jointly manufactured each year fluctuated from a high of 450 tons in 1759 to just 35 tons in 1768. Furnace repairs, inclement weather, and insufficient raw materials could and occasionally did ruin Tayloe's chances of achieving

⁴⁰William Byrd II, "Progress to the Mines," in Louis B. Wright, ed., Prose Works: Narratives of a Colonial Virginian (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), 347-348.

⁴¹Johnson, "Baltimore Company," 47; Johnson, "Genesis of the Baltimore Company," 157, 169-170.

TABLE 6

JOHN TAYLOE II TOBACCO AND IRON PRODUCTION, 1751-1774⁴²

† = portion of annual amount was lost at sea

^a = no value recorded for portion of exports,
or value listed without tonnage figures

<i>Year</i>	<i>Hogsheads of Tobacco</i>	<i>£ Sterling Received</i>	<i>Tons of Pig Iron</i>	<i>£ Sterling Received</i>
1751	45	£27	--	--
1752	53	£303	--	--
1753	59	£246	--	--
1754	97	£430	109	£657
1755	101.5	£781	40.5	£256
1756	75.5	£626	416.5	£2549
1757	50†	£478	124	£706
1758	194†	£865	281†	£1049
1759	89†	£654	450†	£2343
1760	125	£986	258†	£1112
1761	127†	£932	110.5	£566
1762	129	£635 ^a	289	£1617
1763	153†	£712	214†	£1245
1764	119	£696	60	£338
1765	60	£517	24†	£97
1766	75	£540	129†	£667
1767	42	£320	67†	£603 ^a
1768	36	£292	35†	£179 ^a
1769	64†	£606	93†	£550
1770	23	£204	54	£325
1771	28	£198	0	0
1772	47†	£115	120†	£365
1773	19	£94	76†	£167
1774	12†	0	40†	£20

⁴²These figures are drawn from the account books listed in note 31. Pounds sterling amounts have been rounded to the nearest pound.

a productive blast. The Neabsco Furnace produced an average of just under 300 tons of pig iron per year during the years 1756 to 1763--the furnace's most productive period for which there are records. While records for the Occoquan Furnace are less complete, it is probably safe to assume that Tayloe operated it at about the same levels. Thus, Neabsco and Occoquan, which Tayloe operated as one company, produced between 500 and 600 tons of pig iron per year from their two, and sometimes three, furnaces.

Meanwhile, the Baltimore Company produced 376 tons in 1750 from one of its furnaces.⁴³ The Principio Company, another prolific Maryland ironworks established in 1720, produced 820 tons of pig iron in 1736 from its two furnaces.⁴⁴ Thomas Jefferson provided much information on Virginia's iron industry in his famous 1787 Notes on the State of Virginia. Jefferson recalled that David Ross's Campbell County Oxford Furnace manufactured an astounding 1,600 tons of pig iron per year. John Ballendine made 1,000 tons per year at his Bear Garden Furnace in Buckingham County; J. Calloway, John Miller, and Isaac Zane each produced about 600 tons of pig iron annually.⁴⁵ The ironmasters Jefferson described benefited from the plentiful natural resources located in western Virginia, where the iron industry shifted after the Revolution. Thus, while Tayloe's production levels might have been on the low end of this comparative sample, they were still in the general average annual range for colonial ironworks of about 500 tons of pig iron.

⁴³Johnson, "Baltimore Company," 56-58.

⁴⁴Principio Company File, Tate Thompson Brady Papers, VHS. See also, Robbins, Principio Company, 56.

⁴⁵William Peden, ed., Notes on the State of Virginia, by Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1982), 27-28.

To determine whether or not Neabsco and Occoquan were profitable, all marketing and production costs must be deducted from Tayloe's gross annual receipts. In 1756, Tayloe produced 416.5 tons of pig iron at Neabsco. He consigned it to two London merchants in eleven different ships. In all, he received £2549.5.1 for his pig iron, or approximately £6.12 per ton. Tayloe's incomplete records make it difficult to assess his production and marketing costs, but they likely were comparable to Charles Carroll's 1751 Baltimore Company expenses. During that year, Carroll spent £1715 to make £2324, leaving him a profit of over £600.⁴⁶ Carroll's shipping expenses in 1751 included extra charges related to an unusual set of circumstances. The ship carrying his iron to Bristol, the *Charming Molly*, ran ashore in Wales and some of her cargo was thereafter sold for salvage. Carroll then paid additional charges to reship some of the freight, creating total extra expenses in 1751 of more than £127.⁴⁷ This meant that Carroll's expenses in a non-catastrophic year would have been just under £1600. Assuming Tayloe's shipping and production expenses were relatively similar, he would have invested around £1600 in 1756 to make £2549, leaving him with a hefty profit of nearly £1000 from his ironworks alone.

The profitability of the ironworks allowed Tayloe to expand his ironmaking activities and diversify into new enterprises. As discussed above, Tayloe contracted with John Ballendine beginning in 1755 to manage a new furnace at Occoquan in exchange for

⁴⁶Johnson, "Baltimore Company," 56-58. In 1751, Carroll sold 376 tons of pig iron to London and Bristol merchants, and received £2324.10.2, or about £6.3 per ton. It cost £3.2.3 to make a ton of Baltimore pig iron, so Carroll's production costs on 376 tons were £1170.6. Including freight, wharfage, insurance, commission, and other shipping charges, it cost Carroll about £545 to sell his pig iron.

⁴⁷Ibid.

investing in Ballendine's forge complex. In 1763, Tayloe acquired the entire Occoquan Company from Ballendine, and increasingly ran it as one operation along with the works at Neabsco. Travers Nash, clerk at the furnace, recalled that "about the years of 1760 and 1761, the [iron] business increased partly by purchases and partly by drafting slaves from other parts of Colo. Tayloes estate."⁴⁸

After he acquired Occoquan, Tayloe set about expanding the ironmaking capabilities of the estate. He purchased 500 acres between the Occoquan River and Neabsco Creek to connect the two ironworks in 1765. Along with his partner Presly Thornton, he added over 2,500 acres to the Occoquan Company during the late 1760s.⁴⁹ These lands provided ready access to several essential raw materials, especially timber and surface iron ore deposits. Tayloe also added to the labor forces at the two sites. As of 1750, Neabsco had approximately 100 workers, mostly slaves and a few indentured servants, who did everything from skilled ironmaking jobs to agricultural field work. This number remained fairly constant throughout Tayloe's lifetime, as he only occasionally purchased slaves for Neabsco, such as a new slave skipper in 1771. As a new endeavor, however, Occoquan was a different story. Tayloe helped build Occoquan's labor force from scratch. In 1755 and 1756, he purchased Tom, Jack, and fourteen other slaves whose names were not mentioned. Between 1758 and 1760, he added another 23 slaves, and also began hiring from area slaveholders between three and five other slaves for various seasonal work each year. When the estate was inventoried

⁴⁸Travers Nash Deposition, March 1789, File 171.

⁴⁹ "A List of Lands," TFP, 5: 152-153; Prince William County Deed Book Q: 196, 205-208, 209, 356, 374-376; Peggy Shomo Joyner, compiler, Abstracts of Virginia's Northern Neck Warrants & Surveys, 1710-1780 (Portsmouth, Va., 1986), 129.

after Presly Thornton's death in 1771, 69 slave men, women, and children valued at £3185 lived and worked at Occoquan.⁵⁰ Together, the Neabsco and Occoquan companies included over 170 slave laborers and 13,000 acres of prime tidewater lands.

In addition, Tayloe began working on other new enterprises during the early 1760s. To provide the extra water it would take to run the furnaces at higher production levels, Tayloe built "a merchants mill" at Neabsco, which operated in addition to a grist mill and saw mill already on the property.⁵¹ Water mills encompassed some of the most advanced technology of the eighteenth century, and required technical skills and entrepreneurial drive to establish and operate. Operating various types of mills at once allowed Tayloe to extend their use and value beyond the limited season for grinding grain. As long as water was available to power the mill, timber could be sawed into plank for market or into staves for barrels and hogsheads.⁵² Another saw mill existed at Occoquan, from which Tayloe regularly sold various kinds of plank from the 1750s through the 1770s. Indeed, Ballendine exclaimed to Tayloe that he "hope[d] you won't ingage any more plank to be sent by us as the demand here is so great [that I] can venture to tell you I cou'd sell from our own Landing four times as much as our mill can saw."⁵³

⁵⁰Occoquan Company Accounts, TFP, 2: 186, 196; Presly Thornton Account with John Alexander, February 18, 1759, TFP, 55: 404; Thomas Lawson's Occoquan Accounts, 1757-1785, File 171; Occoquan Furnace Inventory; Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, Christmas Eve, 1771, File 171.

⁵¹Travers Nash Deposition, March 1789, File 171. See also, "The Miller in Eighteenth-Century Virginia: An Account of Mills & the Craft of Milling, as well as a Description of the Windmill near the Palace in Williamsburg," (Williamsburg, Va., 1990), 10-13.

⁵²McCusker and Menard, *The Economy of British America*, 323-325; Thomas Berry, "The Rise of Flour Milling in Richmond," *VMHB* 18 (October 1970), 390. All of these authors agree that milling was an industry that required entrepreneurial talent. They define mills as the basis of early industrialization in British America, reinforcing my argument that the North and South were economically, developmentally, and technologically similar before the 1790s.

⁵³John Ballendine to John Tayloe, May 13, 1756, TFP, 54: 1034-1035.

By the early 1770s, however, the “timber was scarce and at some distance from the [Occoquan] Mill,” and Tayloe apparently abandoned it.⁵⁴ Also, by 1771, the older mills at Neabsco began to fall into disrepair, so a new grist mill was constructed. The new mill ground Tayloe’s own corn and wheat, his neighbors’ “Country corn,” and wheat for the market at Alexandria.⁵⁵ Tayloe apparently did quite a business with his mills, as his manager Thomas Lawson estimated that they made “not less than between £7 & £800” in profits during 1774 and 1775. Lawson mused that milling was “a very pretty business could it be carried on to that perfection I would chuse to have it.”⁵⁶

Tayloe initiated some other new enterprises during the 1760s as well. Travers Nash recalled that Tayloe established “a little retail store of Wet and dry goods” at Neabsco. While John Tayloe I had been involved heavily in merchant activities, the younger Tayloe’s merchant role was generally more limited. However, circumstances at Neabsco made it advantageous for Tayloe to open this retail store. Instead of paying his white wage workers a salary, after 1761, Tayloe “principally pa[id] off Wagemen . . . [in] provisions.”⁵⁷ During the 1760s, Tayloe regularly received goods and provisions intended for sale to his workers. While this was not likely a high-volume business, Tayloe may have made some money from the higher prices he could charge at the store his workers had no choice but to patronize.

⁵⁴Occoquan Company Accounts, TFP, 2: 211; Special Report by the Commissioners, File 171; William Holburne Deposition, August 28, 1798, File 171.

⁵⁵Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, December 2, 1771, File 171.

⁵⁶Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, September 24, 1775, File 171.

⁵⁷Travers Nash Deposition, March 1789, File 171.

At about the same time, Tayloe began building new ships at both Neabsco and Occoquan. This proved to be a valuable strategy for all of his business interests. Tayloe used flats to float his ore from his lands in Maryland to his Virginia ironworks. His overseers in Maryland sent as many as a dozen or more shipments of ore each year. Thus, Tayloe purchased an additional ore flat to facilitate a more regular transportation of his ore. In the meantime, Tayloe began constructing ships to use for transporting goods to market and among his numerous plantations. In 1761 he built two ships at Neabsco. Thereafter, Occoquan became the center of Tayloe's shipbuilding activities. During the 1760s and 1770s, Occoquan ship carpenters built an unknown but likely moderate number of schooners, sloops, and other vessels. In 1766, Tayloe sold a small ferry boat to William Brockenbrough from the Occoquan Company. In 1771, Lawson examined a recently received shipment of supplies, and was relieved to notify Tayloe that their awaited "Sail Duck & Rigging for the vessels engross more than two thirds of the amount."⁵⁸ Lawson later complained to Tayloe that "the new Sloop . . . has been ready for launching this three months almost," but animosities between skippers Lawson hired delayed the launching. As late as the 1780s, when ironmaking at Occoquan largely was abandoned, slaves were still engaged in shipbuilding there, as a half dozen slaves were working on "A Schooner on the stocks."⁵⁹

Tayloe's ships regularly visited Hobb's Hole (later Tappahannock), Baltimore, Alexandria, and Norfolk. During the 1760s and 1770s, at least eight sloops and

⁵⁸Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, October 27, 1771, File 171.

⁵⁹William Holburne Deposition, March 10, 1798, File 171; Occoquan Furnace Inventory; Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, Christmas Eve, 1771, File 171; Occoquan Company Accounts, TFP, 2: 211.

schooners named *Betty*, *Jenny*, *Occoquan*, *Polly*, *Beckey*, *Nancy*, *Elizabeth*, and *Auogon* serviced Tayloe's various estates.⁶⁰ Tayloe's shipbuilding and shipping activities nearly made him a one-man "shipline."⁶¹ Furthermore, his ironmaking activities contributed to his ability to participate successfully in the shipbuilding industry, as each vessel required tons of iron and timber. Indeed, Chesapeake shipbuilders nearly dominated colonial shipbuilding in the same manner they did colonial ironmaking. Numerous navigable rivers, abundant woods close to waterways, and ample swamps to supply the industry with timber, tar, pitch, and turpentine meant that the Chesapeake in the years before the Revolution annually produced about 50 ships. Only Massachusetts outdistanced the Chesapeake in pre-Revolutionary shipbuilding.⁶²

From the 1750s until Tayloe's death in 1779, ships played a central role in allowing Tayloe to communicate with his distant overseers and coordinate the activities of his various enterprises. Tayloe sent pig iron to markets at the "Port of Rappahannock" and Norfolk in his sloops and schooners, and Ballendine delivered pine plank from

⁶⁰John Tayloe II Account Book, 1749-1768, makes numerous mentions of Tayloe's ships. See also Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, October 27, 1771, December 2, 1771, Christmas Eve, 1771, September 24, 1775, and November 20, 1777, File 171; William Lawson Deposition, March 11, 1789, File 171; William Holburne Deposition, May 10, 1798, File 171; Travers Nash Deposition, March 1789, File 171; Occoquan Company Inventory. Sloops and schooners were among the smallest, quickest, and most frequently built ships in the colonies. Sloops averaged 31 tons while schooners averaged 34 tons. Brigs, ships, and snows were larger and slower vessels intended for the trans-Atlantic trade. See William Kelso, "Shipbuilding in Virginia, 1763-1774," Records of the Columbia Historical Society (1973), 2-4; Arthur Pierce Middleton, "Ships and Shipbuilding in the Chesapeake Bay and Tributaries," in Ernest M. Eller, ed., The Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution (Centerville, Md., 1981), 98.

⁶¹Kelso argued that ownership by a single man of more than four vessels comprised a shipline, and found that four such lines existed in Virginia during the Revolution (John Goodrich and John Greenwood, both of Norfolk; John Thompson of Surry; and John Wilkins of Princess Anne County). See "Shipbuilding in Virginia," 9.

⁶²Price, "Economic Function," 168, 185; Middleton, "Ships and Shipbuilding in the Chesapeake Bay," 101, 108, 112, 120.

Neabsco to one Mr. Pettite via “our Little sloop.”⁶³ The schooner *Occoquan* traveled down to Presly Thornton’s Northumberland estate to retrieve corn for the ironworks’ slaves, while the *Nancy* sailed to Freestone Point at the confluence of the Neabsco Creek and Occoquan Bay “after shells” to use as the fluxing agent for the next blast.⁶⁴ The *Betty*, *Beckey*, and *Elizabeth* frequently carried goods between the Maryland plantations and the ironworks, and all the vessels assisted in moving slaves, correspondence, and provisions among the distant corners of Tayloe’s massive estate.⁶⁵

Tayloe also owned a part-interest in at least two ships involved in the trans-Atlantic trade named *Tayloe* and *John and Presly*. Tayloe paid £712 for an eighth-interest in the *Tayloe* in May of 1758, and in 1759 made £270. At that rate of return it would only have taken Tayloe another two years before he profited from his initial investment. For whatever reason, however, Tayloe sold his interest in the ship in late 1759.⁶⁶ Perhaps Tayloe realized that the British trade would not be as lucrative as the Chesapeake coastwise trade. Many colonial shipbuilders found this to be the case, and often sold their larger, trans-Atlantic vessels to British merchants and captains after a brief attempt to compete in an extremely competitive trade.⁶⁷

⁶³John Ballendine to John Tayloe, May 13, 1756.

⁶⁴Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, December 2, 1771, Christmas Eve, 1771, File 171.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶John Tayloe II Account Book, 1749-1768. Tayloe had likely long worked with this particular ship, as *Virginia Gazette* port arrivals and departures demonstrate. Throughout the 1750s, the *Tayloe* regularly landed at the “Port of Rappahannock,” which lay across the Rappahannock River from Tayloe’s main plantation at Mt. Airy. In September of 1752, the *Tayloe* departed with 23 tons of pig iron, which had to have been manufactured at either Tayloe’s Neabsco Furnace or the Principio Company’s Stafford County Accokeek Furnace, which shut down in 1753.

⁶⁷Jacob Price, “Economic Function and the Growth of American Port Towns in the Eighteenth Century,” *Perspectives in American History* 8 (1974), 168.

Renting lands constituted a final entrepreneurial activity connected to the ironworks in which Tayloe engaged. Travers Nash remembered that, during the 1760s, the ironworks' managers picked up the additional responsibility of "taking the collection of rents and granting leases" to some of Tayloe's numerous tenants.⁶⁸ For example, in 1761, Tayloe and Thornton added a small parcel of land to their ore banks in Maryland. While these lands provided essential raw materials for the ironworks in the form of iron ore, they were apparently "Hilly & poor Land destitute of Clapboard Timber." A small portion of the lands was useful for cultivation, and a dwelling house, tobacco house, apple orchard, and slave quarter existed on the property.⁶⁹ By 1770, Tayloe realized a way to derive even more profit from these lands. Richard Croxall, a manager for the Baltimore Company and one of Tayloe's business associates, recommended a man of "honesty and the greatest industry" to whom Tayloe could rent "that plantation where the mine bank is." Thomas Lawson met with the man and seemed to agree with Croxall's recommendation. Lawson arranged to rent out the plantation for nine years for a total of £315, reserving the iron ore for Tayloe, and believed this would ensure "that the place will be of more than double the value." Lawson followed suit with other tracts of Tayloe's Maryland land as well.⁷⁰

By the 1770s, Lawson had long counted the administration of such rental arrangements among his duties. In the 1750s, Tayloe purchased a tract containing 4,000

⁶⁸Travers Nash Deposition, March 1789, File 171.

⁶⁹Anne Arundel County Deed Book BB 2, 629-631, MSA; Baltimore County Certificates, Patented, May 7, 1757, Folded 4818, MSA.

⁷⁰Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, December 2, 1771, File 171.

acres in Loudoun County, the Kittockton Manor. He divided them into lots of about 150 acres each to rent. Tayloe typically gave his tenants a three-life lease for 40 shillings Virginia money each year “to be paid at the Neabsco Furnace in Prince William County.” Tenants were prohibited from cutting timber and subleasing to other tenants, and were required to make improvements.⁷¹ Life leases prevailed throughout the Chesapeake until the mid-eighteenth century because they ensured long-term rental income and provided incentives for tenants to improve and maintain the land.⁷² Tayloe offered 32 lots for rent, and quickly rented at least 23 of them. Within a brief time, tenants built the required houses and even a mill, providing Tayloe with an annual income of about £50 to £60 current.⁷³

It is interesting to note the timing of some of Tayloe’s forays into other entrepreneurial endeavors. In 1751 Tayloe helped organize the land speculation venture called the Ohio Company, which had been granted 500,000 acres of land on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers by the Virginia Council.⁷⁴ Tayloe invested in a second ironworks in 1755, and began leasing 32 150-acre lots by 1757 in Loudoun County. In 1758 and 1759, he briefly took a turn in the British trade by investing in a trans-Atlantic shipping vessel

⁷¹ “A List of Lands,” TFP, 5: 152; Loudoun County Deed Book B: 229-232.

⁷² Lorena S. Walsh, “Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder: Estate Management and Tenant Fortunes in Southern Maryland, 1640-1820,” Agricultural History 59 (1985), 375, 386-387; Edwin Perkins, “The Entrepreneurial Spirit in Colonial America: The Foundations of Modern Business History,” Business History Review 63 (1) (Spring 1989), 175.

⁷³ Loudoun County Deed Book B: 229-232, 508-514; D: 269-282, 285-290, 371-373, 401-403, 476-479, 539-541, 639-641, 707-712; E: 138-141, 187-189; G: 215-218.

⁷⁴ See Chapter 2 for a more in-depth analysis of Tayloe’s other land speculation activities. Ohio Company Articles of Agreement, May 23, 1751, LVA; see also, Alfred P. James, The Ohio Company (Pittsburgh, 1959), 205-211.

in partnership with a London merchant. In 1761, he opened a retail store, renewed his shipbuilding activity, expanded his ore banks, and built a new merchant mill. In 1765, Tayloe attempted to buy lands on behalf of “a scheme to make salt, . . . oil of Tarr, and fish oil,” although Princess Anne County residents blocked the venture on the grounds that the lands included “a common fishing hole.”⁷⁵ In 1770, Tayloe rented his Maryland ore banks to increase the value of the lands, and in 1771, he erected a new mill at Neabsco to replace his older ones.

A number of historians, notably John McCusker and Russell Menard, have argued that planters sought to diversify their economic activities when tobacco prices dropped and the economy contracted, and that once the economy recovered planters often cut back or abandoned the new activities.⁷⁶ Tayloe’s activities question the assumption that many of these alternatives to tobacco were depression-induced, and weaken the argument that tobacco price recovery prompted planters to neglect other newer parts of their businesses. Using Joyce Chaplin’s terms, Tayloe was an innovator, or someone who had always looked for new opportunities to diversify regardless of market conditions.⁷⁷ Tayloe sometimes worked on new enterprises in the midst of major price spikes. Tobacco prices reached some of their highest levels in 1755, 1760, and 1770⁷⁸--years when Tayloe was investing in new ironworks, building mills and other enterprises, and leasing new lands.

⁷⁵ John Wadman Petition, 1771, VHS.

⁷⁶ McCusker and Menard, The Economy of British America, 126-127.

⁷⁷ Joyce E. Chaplin, An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815 (Chapel Hill, 1993), 187.

⁷⁸ For an analysis of tobacco price drops and spikes, see McCusker and Menard, The Economy of British America, 121.

Although some of his new enterprises flourished just as the economy was recovering from a contraction, he frequently began new projects in the midst of economic expansion.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Tayloe usually made a long-term commitment to most of his enterprises and investments; his brief venture with British merchant vessels in 1758 and 1759 was an exception. His involvement with the Ohio Company, Occoquan Company, Kittockton, shipbuilding, and milling lasted in each case until his death in 1779. Perhaps Tayloe's ability to diversify was self-reinforcing--that is, his success in diversifying and maintaining his various business activities was due in part to the generally high level of diversification that had previously characterized his large estate and made it profitable. Diversification and business development provided protections against the uncertainties of dependence on tobacco alone, and strengthened planter-businessmen's ability to withstand each economic contraction in a productive way that helped the economic growth of the Chesapeake as a whole.

None of Tayloe's entrepreneurial activities would have been possible or successful without the oversight and labor of his numerous managers, clerks, indentured servants, and slaves. On an estate as extensive as Tayloe's, trustworthy and diligent overseers, managers, and agents were essential. Tayloe depended on these employees to look out for his best interests, conduct business effectively on his behalf, and manage fairly the other employees, servants, and slaves who worked beneath them. Tayloe depended in equal measure on his servants and slaves to provide the labor necessary to operate each enterprise and farm, especially once they acquired the special skills and

⁷⁹Chaplin, An Anxious Pursuit, 62-63, 121.

knowledge required to run mills and ironworks successfully. Tayloe valued his slave craftsmen and recognized their skills, talent, and contributions.

Managers and agents provided the key link between Tayloe and the various parts of his estate. The men who held these positions were more than overseers--they conducted business for Tayloe on an estate-wide level. They attempted, for example, to coordinate market sales from the various plantations, address debts due to various estate accounts, track down runaway servants and slaves, and generally represent Tayloe's interest regarding any other business matter that might arise. Tayloe trusted his agents, sought their advice, and relied heavily on the close relationships he built with them--a relationship that was much different from the one he had with his regular plantation overseers. Like many planters, Tayloe had difficulties with overseers and complained about their ineptitude. For a while, Tayloe was concerned about the productivity and management of Avery Dyer and Joseph Seamons, overseers at two of his Maryland plantations, because they delayed in harvesting their crops of corn and then produced less than Tayloe expected. Furthermore, Dyer and Seamons raised hogs to provide meat for other parts of the plantations, and in 1771 sent "30 such poor shoats . . . as perhaps you never saw, and looked as if they had never seen a grain of corn in their life time."⁸⁰

John Tayloe II's most important agent was Thomas Lawson, manager of the Neabsco and Occoquan Ironworks. Lawson came to Neabsco in 1755 and worked there

⁸⁰Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, Christmas Eve, 1771, File 171. Many historians have examined the relationship between planters and overseers. See, for example, Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves, 409-413; Gerald Mullin, Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia (London, 1972), 29-32; Eugene D. Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York, 1972), 7-25; Kenneth M. Stampp, The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South (New York, 1956), 38-40.

until his death in 1785. Throughout his employment, Lawson received £100 currency annual salary for his management of both iron companies. Lawson had many responsibilities. Besides overseeing the production of iron by the works, he also handled the Kittockton leases and rents, coordinated supplies and slave labor for and between the ironworks and Maryland estates, supervised shipbuilding activities and mill operations, negotiated labor contracts and other personnel issues with the employees, and corresponded with Tayloe's numerous business associates on a variety of matters. Lawson continually worried over the immense debt owed to Tayloe's enterprises, just as Tayloe wondered what could be achieved "could I get half that is due to this place and Occoquan."⁸¹

On his frequent travels, Lawson always got the latest market information for Tayloe and negotiated deals with other businessmen when possible. On one trip to Baltimore, Lawson arranged with a Captain Grieg to take "30 tons your Iron, freight free, and to wait for it till the 15th of January." Lawson excitedly reported to Tayloe that the Maryland furnaces were not able to meet the demands of the waiting ships, and was "not sorry . . . as ours will be in greater demand."⁸² When Tayloe was at one point considering investing in the "Hopewell Forge" with one "WB," Lawson advised him against it.⁸³ Lawson felt the risk outweighed the possible benefits, especially since he had heard that

⁸¹Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, December 2, 1771, File 171.

⁸²*Ibid.*

⁸³The exact location of this works and identity of "WB" are not known. It is possible that the reference is to the Hopewell Furnace established west of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. William Bird of Hopewell, New Jersey owned what became the furnace lands and operated a small forge somewhere on the property. His son, Mark Bird, built Hopewell Furnace in 1771. However, William Bird, forge operator, died in 1761, and his son, Mark Bird, operated only the furnace, no forges.

“there are a great many reparations necessary to be done there before any business can be carried into perfection.” He worried that “WB” “was born too far North for either you or I” and preferred that Tayloe invest his money “in the purchase of those works more convenient to your own.”⁸⁴ Lawson realized his stake in Tayloe’s success, and regularly assured Tayloe that he would put forward his “best endeavours for the best.”⁸⁵

Thomas Lawson’s biggest fault appears to have been his bookkeeping methods. In 1771, Presly Thornton, Tayloe’s partner in the Occoquan Company, died. Thornton’s son was not interested in the Company and was apparently more of an annoyance than a help. Therefore, in 1773, John Tayloe II purchased Thornton’s quarter-share in the company for £500 (roughly one quarter of the outstanding £1822 due the company). In addition, Tayloe discounted a large debt owed him by Thornton and released him from all book debts associated with the ironworks. Shortly after Tayloe and Thornton came to this agreement, Lawson made an entry unknown to the partners of £1356 due him for annual wages Lawson never entered in the accounts from as early as the 1750s. Furthermore, Lawson claimed he was to be paid in sterling, making this new debt of even greater significance. When Tayloe’s executors recognized the new entry, they filed a suit against Lawson (and later his executors, who countersued) that lasted for almost forty years.⁸⁶

Lawson hired a number of employees to assist him in running the works. Travers Nash served as the head clerk of the works, and felt he “did under Lawson’s direction

⁸⁴Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, October 27, 1771, File 171.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

⁸⁶File 171; Presly and Susan Thornton to John Tayloe, Deed, January 1, 1798, TFP, 5: 592. In the end, Tayloe’s estate had to pay Lawson’s estate £50 currency from 1755 through 1785 with interest.

transact the chief part of the business of the works.” Nash also arrived at Neabsco in 1755 and worked there until 1775, when he and the Occoquan overseer, Posey, got into “a fisty cuff battle . . . wherein the latter came off victorious, and entirely drove the other off the field.” Lawson described Nash as a difficult person with a “most wicked and revengefull disposition,” and his injuries from the fight apparently prevented him from working again.⁸⁷ While head clerk, Nash received between £30 and £50 currency each year. Nash recalled that a number of other assistants worked at Neabsco as well, some of whom he felt were not entirely necessary. These men, such as Posey, worked in a more typical overseer capacity and received £20 per year plus room and board for their services.⁸⁸ Several men served in turn as head clerk at Neabsco after Nash became incapacitated.⁸⁹

A number of other white workers served the ironworks as well. Lawson hired several white skippers, for example. As early as 1755, “white skippers on wages” operated the ore flats. In 1771, Lawson found himself trying to smooth over the personalities and egos of several of his captains. Captain Gallahue was “determined to be master of the new Sloop,” while Captain Steele “of course expects the *Beckey* as his lot.” Captain Dick piloted the *Polly* and Captain Grant navigated the schooner *Betty*.⁹⁰ Not all the ships were piloted by white skippers. As of 1778, William Lawson recalled that two

⁸⁷Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, December 24, 1771, September 24, 1775, File 171.

⁸⁸Travers Nash Deposition, March 1789, File 171.

⁸⁹Thomas Lawson Allison Deposition, August 7, 1798, File 171; William Lawson Deposition, March 11, 1789, File 171; William Holburne Deposition, May 10, 1798, File 171. Allison and Lawson were Thomas Lawson’s relatives and parties to the countersuit. William Holburne became one of John Tayloe III’s chief agents during the early nineteenth century.

⁹⁰Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, Christmas Eve 1771, November 20, 1777, File 171.

schooners were navigated by slave crews while one sloop sailed under a hired skipper and slave crew. Increasingly, Thomas Lawson found that there “[was] no such thing as getting White Skippers [anymore], and if I could they are generally as bad as the Blacks.”⁹¹ As with the many other enterprises at Neabsco, Tayloe’s slaves began to replace white workers and servants as they learned the appropriate skills.

Tayloe regularly brought convict and indentured servants to the works to serve their terms. When Occoquan opened, Tayloe immediately purchased £90 worth of servants to assist in the production of iron. Convict servants served terms of up to fourteen years, while indentured servants served an average of seven years. Some 50,000 convict servants were brought to America between 1718 and 1775. Chesapeake planters received a majority of these convicts, most of whom originated in London jails.⁹² Tayloe purchased convicts individually throughout his lifetime, many of whom ended up working at his ironworks.

At least seven of these men attempted to escape from service at Neabsco, and apparently repeatedly had the opportunity to do so while working as skippers or crewmen on Tayloe’s ships. Timothy Carpenter had only been in Virginia for nine months when he ran away from the schooner *Billy*. Seventeen-year-old Arundale Carnes ran away from Neabsco in a canoe in August of 1766, and was said to be likely to try to pass for a doctor, a gentleman’s body servant, or a sailor. William Simms, Tynie Roach, and James

⁹¹Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, November 20, 1777, File 171; William Lawson Deposition, March 11, 1789, File 171.

⁹²Occoquan Company Accounts, TFP, 2: 186; Stephen Innes, ed., Work and Labor in Early America (Chapel Hill, 1988), 10; Richard S. Dunn, “Servants and Slaves: The Recruitment and Employment of Labor,” in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds., Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era (Baltimore, 1984), 170-171; A. Roger Ekirch, Bound for America: The Transportation of British Convicts to the Colonies, 1718-1775 (New York, 1987).

M'Lane all ran away from Tayloe's ships while they docked at various ports on the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers. These problems aside, Tayloe recognized local planters' eagerness for bound laborers and imported two shiploads of convicts in the 1770s.⁹³ While he kept a few of these servants for his own use, he sold most of them to other planters. Tayloe also owned several indentured servants, such as the "Ironman" William Gill and the forge carpenter John Milborn, both of whom also ran away from the works.⁹⁴

Proportionately, Tayloe's slaves absconded less frequently than did his convict servants, although the majority of Tayloe's slave runaways fled from the ironworks rather than from other parts of his estate. Skilled slaves, such as ironworkers, were more likely to run away than unskilled slaves because their daily contact with whites gave them the skills, knowledge, and confidence to operate successfully and comfortably in the white world.⁹⁵ For example, Frank and George ran away from Tayloe's Maryland mine banks in 1754, and miner Dick ran away with a servant man named Richard Wiggan in 1759.⁹⁶ Pompey ran away from Neabsco in 1757 and made it across the Potomac to Charles County, Maryland, before he was captured. Another male slave belonging to Neabsco got

⁹³Virginia Gazette, September 2, 1757; August 29, 1766; December 13, 1770; December 24, 1772; July 8, October 7, 1773; September 22, November 10, 1774.

⁹⁴Ibid., July 12, 1776; Maryland Gazette, September 16, 1762.

⁹⁵Lewis, Coal, Iron, and Slaves, 131; Mullin, Flight and Rebellion, 83-98.

⁹⁶Maryland Gazette, October 10, 1754; September 6, 1759.

ten miles from the works before he was “taken up” by a local planter.⁹⁷ Likewise, Anthony got ten miles from Occoquan before being caught by James Calk in 1757.⁹⁸

In 1765, three Occoquan carpenters, named Billy, Billy, and Sampson, and a convict servant named Joseph Fosset escaped together and were all recaptured, but ship carpenter Billy repeatedly attempted to obtain his freedom. In August of 1768, he again ran away from Occoquan. He was described as “a very well set fellow, about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches high, chews tobacco, can play on a violin . . . and is by trade a ship carpenter.” Billy took with him “a black cotton velvet jacket, two white shirts, one pair of brown and a pair of check linen trousers, an old fine hat bound round the brim with black tape, two pair of shoes, and plated buckles.” During his first escape attempt, he had run to Carolina, “where, by virtue of a forged pass that some good natured person had wrote for him, he had travelled without much interruption.”⁹⁹ This time, Billy was recaptured within weeks of his escape, but by February of 1769, Lawson again advertised that Billy had run away. Lawson supposed that since Billy had just been brought back from Carolina, where “he had travelled as a freeman[,] it is more than probable that if he is not now engaged by some ship builders to the northward, that he will endeavour to get on board some craft, bound for Charles-Town, or to some place in Carolina, where he expects to be free.”¹⁰⁰ Billy’s skills undoubtedly helped him find employment and pass

⁹⁷TFP, 56: 402; Westmoreland County Orders, February 25, 1760, 1758-1761, p. 103.

⁹⁸TFP, 56: 406.

⁹⁹Virginia Gazette, August 4, 1768. See also Mullin, Flight and Rebellion, 111.

¹⁰⁰Virginia Gazette, February 9, 1769.

as free. Lawson described him as a masterful ship carpenter, who could “not only . . . repair, but . . . [also] build all sorts of small craft.”¹⁰¹

Ironmaking was the nonagricultural pursuit that made the most use of slave labor, and Tayloe’s works absolutely were dependent on slaves. Approximately 170 slaves worked and lived at Neabsco and Occoquan. Tayloe mostly used his own slaves at the ironworks, but did regularly hire a small number of others. For example, between 1759 and 1779, Tayloe annually hired three to five slaves from Thomas Lawson for £12.10. each, including “Tippin & his wife,” Nan, and Paisley. In 1759, Presly Thornton paid just over £39 “for the hire of 2 negro carpenters for 9 months.”¹⁰² The majority of Tayloe’s slaves at Neabsco and Occoquan, such as Billy, were skilled. By the 1770s, slaves possessed the full spectrum of skills related to the works and increasingly replaced white craftsmen in the head positions. William Lawson, Neabsco bookkeeper between 1778 and 1783, recalled that the following labor arrangements were in place when he arrived at the works:

[F]ourteen Wood cutters besides white men hired at different times, Six colliers and a hire[d] Overseer--five blacksmiths[,] two ship Carpenters, two Wheelwrights, two Coopers, two shoemakers, one tanner[,] three house carpenters, a grist Mill kept by a Negro, a Merchant Mill kept by a hired Miller and a Negro, two horse teams and One oxtteam drove by negroes, six or eight hands employed in Manufacturing Cloth and linnen . . . a Schooner navigated by five hands, a Sloop Navigated by a hired Skipper and four hands, a schooner Navigated by four hands, two hands employed in a flat bringing Ore to the landing . . . I cannot exactly say how many hands were employed at the Mine bank in diging [sic] ore, hauling it to the landing and working the plantation there, tho’ I believe there could not be fewer than twenty.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Thomas Lawson’s Occoquan Accounts, File 171; TFP, 56: 404.

Skilled workers were essential to the various enterprises at Neabsco and Occoquan, and each furnace depended on the whole pool of skilled laborers available at both works. For example, Lawson indicated that “whenever either furnace was going into blast it was assisted by hands from the other in preparing the Stock [materials needed for the blast].”¹⁰³ Lawson’s description also illustrates that both men and women performed vital and gender-determined functions at the iron plantations. As early as 1747, 31 women worked at Neabsco and at least nine women labored at the Maryland ore banks. In addition, the Occoquan labor force included 25 females in 1771. Slave men worked as founders, furnace keepers, fillers, blacksmiths, millers, colliers, miners, woodcutters, carpenters, and skippers, while slave women worked as spinners, weavers, cooks, laundresses, dairy maids, and domestics.¹⁰⁴

Frequent escape attempts and recognition of the demanding pace of iron production caused ironmasters to be more accommodating to industrial slaves. When the furnace was in blast, it was an around-the-clock operation, and shifts of slaves were required to attend to the blast as long as it lasted. Tayloe and Lawson recognized their dependence on their slaves’ talents and skills. Lawson notified Tayloe in 1775 that “Poor old founder Peter” was on his deathbed, and added, “though he has not for some years past been capable to do much business as a founder, yet as an adviser and a check upon

¹⁰³William Lawson Deposition, March 11, 1789, File 171.

¹⁰⁴Occoquan Company Inventory, CWF. Only one eighteenth century inventory exist from Neabsco, although it does not provide details on slave occupations. See John Tayloe Estate Inventory. However, several nineteenth-century inventories exist and are informative regarding slave occupations and the sexual division of labor at the ironworks. See “Working Hands Belonging to Neabsco,” 1824, TFP, 27: 773; 1825 Neabsco Inventory, TFP, 6: 396; 1828 Neabsco Inventory, TFP, 7: 272-276. See also, Robbins, Principio Company, 91-92; Samuel Sydney Bradford, “The Negro Ironworker in Antebellum Manufacturing,” JSH 25 (May 1959), 194-195; Charles B. Dew, “David Ross and the Oxford Iron Works: A Study of Industrial Slavery in the Early Nineteenth-Century South,” WMO 3d ser., 31 (April 1974), 195.

those whom he taught the trade, I shall greatly miss him.”¹⁰⁵ Founders had full responsibility for the daily management of the blast furnace, and Lawson recognized Peter’s importance to the works as a founder, teacher, and adviser. Lawson increasingly employed slaves like Peter, instead of white servants, in the most skilled positions. For example, the founders at Occoquan, Jack and James, were also slaves.¹⁰⁶

These skilled slaves increasingly worked without direct supervision, spent considerable time by themselves or with other slaves, and had at least some ability to move about the region on business. William Lawson recalled that two schooners and one of the ore flats were operated by slaves without white skippers. When Presly Thornton died, the appraisal of the estate was delayed because “four of the negroes which navigate the Sloop were not then arrived.” In 1771, a number of slaves made what was likely a regular trip from Occoquan to Maryland and back alone.¹⁰⁷ Around Christmas that same year, “Potomack Dick” went to the town of Dumfries alone on company business. He “got so very Drunk . . . the day after the last deep snow fell, that he could not reach home, but perished on the road side in the night time, there being no one nearby to assist

¹⁰⁵Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, September 24, 1775, File 171; Lewis, Coal, Iron, and Slaves, 83, 97; Dew, “David Ross and the Oxford Iron Works,” 195.

¹⁰⁶Occoquan Company Inventory, CWF. The success of the operations at Neabsco and Occoquan add further weight to the argument that industrial slavery was successful and profitable. Robert S. Starobin first argued for the profitability of industrial slavery, while Richard C. Wade argued that urban and industrial slavery required conditions by definition that eroded masters’ control over slaves. See Robert S. Starobin, Industrial Slavery in the Old South (New York, 1970), 115; Richard C. Wade, Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860 (New York, 1964), Chapters 4 and 6. T. Stephen Whitman provides another case study of a successful industrial enterprise that used slave labor in early Maryland. See, T. Stephen Whitman, “Industrial Slavery at the Margin: The Maryland Chemical Works,” JSH 59 (1) (February 1993), 31-62.

¹⁰⁷William Lawson Deposition, March 11, 1789, File 171; Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, Christmas Eve, 1771, File 171.

him.”¹⁰⁸ While Dick’s freedom resulted in tragedy, it is representative of the degree of autonomy and self-determination Tayloe’s skilled slaves received in return for their exacting work. Furthermore, such high degrees of mobility among the skilled slave population may partly explain the relative infrequency with which Tayloe’s slaves ran away.¹⁰⁹ While Tayloe’s records make no mention of payment to slaves for overwork, or work above the required amount, it was a common feature of industrial slavery by the mid-eighteenth century and it is therefore possible that Tayloe occasionally used this incentive.¹¹⁰

The slaves at the ironworks married and raised children, although men dominated the overall population. Sixty-nine slaves resided at Occoquan in 1771, including 38 men, 10 women, and 21 children. Judging by their appraised values, eight of the women were of childbearing age. By the Revolution, the Neabsco slave population of more than 100 slaves likely had a more gender-balanced ratio than the two-to-one sex ratio of 1747. While most of these slaves were probably American-born, a number had either been born in Africa or were named by African parents, including, Collier Quamina, Congoe, Quagua, Juba, Old Quagua, and Cuffy. Two of these men, Quagua and Cuffy, were the most valuable slaves at Occoquan, each appraised at £120.¹¹¹ It may be that some

¹⁰⁸Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, Christmas Eve, 1771, File 171.

¹⁰⁹Thomas Jefferson’s skilled slaves similarly led relatively independent and unsupervised lives and received preferential treatment because of their skills. See Stanton, Slavery at Monticello, 27, 30.

¹¹⁰For a good description of the overwork system, see Charles Dew, Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge (New York, 1994), 108-121

¹¹¹Occoquan Company Inventory, CWF. For good discussions of slave naming practices, see Gary B. Nash, Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia’s Black Community, 1720-1840 (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 79-88; Herbert G. Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925 (New York,

Occoquan slaves named their children after fathers or other family members. Old Daniel and a child named Daniel both lived at Occoquan. Likewise, Great Ben, Schooner Ben, and a small child named Ben resided at Occoquan. Old Quagua and Quagua were likely related. Founder James was listed next to a younger James, who perhaps was learning the founder's skills. A similar pattern occurred at Neabsco as well.

While direct family relationships are not discernible, the repeated use of the names Robin, Boatswain, Billy, Jack, Bristol, and Ralph among the Neabsco slave men suggests some degree of kinship ties. In analyzing the naming practices of slaves in Mississippi, South Carolina, and Georgia, Herbert Gutman found that slaves frequently named children after fathers in a fashion that affirmed the important cultural role of slave fathers, which slaveowners tended to underrate.¹¹² All of the Neabsco and Occoquan slaves belonged to an absentee planter, worked largely unsupervised, and spent most of their time with other African Americans. It is therefore probable that the slave communities of Neabsco and Occoquan maintained and practiced a number of beliefs and traditions, some of which were likely African influenced, that differed from those of their owners.¹¹³

1976), 185-203; and, Peter H. Wood, Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion (New York, 1974), 181-186.

¹¹²Occoquan Company Inventory, CWF; John Tayloe Estate Inventory; Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 191-192.

¹¹³Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective (Boston, 1992, 1976), 38-41; Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves, 318-319, 339-351; Lawrence W. Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom (Oxford, 1977), 4-5, 135; Brenda E. Stevenson, Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South (New York, 1996), 171-172.

Even with Lawson's constant supervision of the business and his slaves' and servants' usually steady labors, Tayloe experienced a number of difficulties that illustrate the risks of operating an enterprise as complex and intricate as an ironworks. Problems with runaways, delays in receiving supplies, malfunctioning equipment, and uncooperative weather regularly interrupted the smooth functioning of Tayloe's iron companies. The 1770s were a particularly troublesome decade for Tayloe's iron enterprises, as Neabsco and Occoquan regularly experienced setbacks that resulted in some of their most unproductive blasts. During the years for which records exist (1770-1774, 1777-1778), the two ironworks together produced a meager 583 tons of pig iron worth £878.3.¹¹⁴ The works manufactured no pig iron at all in 1771.

By 1770, Neabsco had operated for over forty years, while Occoquan had been in blast for fifteen. The works shared the same lands and thus timber and ore supplies, which were depleted from years of lumbering and mining activities. Throughout the early 1770s, Thomas Lawson repeatedly experienced shortages of coal and ore. He informed Tayloe that Neabsco could have been in blast during the early winter of 1771 had that works not had to supply "Occoquan with a good deal of coal last spring." Afterwards, Occoquan was still short of the coal it would take to put that furnace into blast.¹¹⁵ Lawson fell short of the necessary amount of iron ore in 1771 and 1775. He sent a sloop to Baltimore in 1771 to fetch a load of ore, but the vessel "vexatious[ly]" returned empty. In 1775, Lawson feared "not having a sufficiency of Ore to carry her [Neabsco furnace]

¹¹⁴See note 31. This amount does not include the 104 tons produced in 1777 nor the 189 tons produced in 1778, as no value was recorded for production in those years.

¹¹⁵Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, October 27, 1771, File 171.

on the course of the Winter,” and intended to send to Baltimore to see what might be available there. Years of mining on the Anne Arundel and Baltimore County lands drained the ore deposits there. Lawson admitted “that the Bank is more scanty than usual, but I cannot help thinking there has been some misconduct also.”¹¹⁶

Lawson acknowledged the impact of this resource depletion on milling activities as well. He told Tayloe, “The logs in the woods are now at such a distance from our saw mill, and the teames being otherwise necessarily engaged has hitherto prevented the plank being all of it got ready and sent to Mr. Thornton as I intended.” By the end of the decade, one observer recalled that the Occoquan saw mill was abandoned because “[t]he timber was scarce and at some distance from the Mill,” and was therefore no longer profitable.¹¹⁷

Deteriorating facilities at the ironworks further interrupted production. In 1771, Tayloe installed new hearths in the furnaces at both Neabsco and Occoquan. In October, Lawson reported to Tayloe that the new hearth had just been completed; although “the Stones that compose it were a good deal too small, yet am in hopes will endure a pretty long blast,” he added. Besides the hearth, Neabsco’s “furnace Wheel and shaft . . . were as much out of order as could be, & indeed the Shaft was very rotten, as are also the bellows.”¹¹⁸ In all, the repairs to Neabsco’s furnace took several months to complete. At just about the same time, the Occoquan Furnace required a new hearth and bellows,

¹¹⁶Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, Christmas Eve, 1771, File 171; Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, September 24, 1775, File 171.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*; “Special Report by the Commissioners,” File 171; William Holburne Deposition, August 28, 1798, File 171.

¹¹⁸Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, October 27, 1771, File 171.

which a white craftsman named James Rowlings repaired. Thus, in 1771, neither furnace produced pig iron. Unfortunately, Lawson's hopes for the Neabsco hearth stones went unfulfilled; by September of 1775, he was again overseeing the "putting in [of] a New Hearth at Neabsco."¹¹⁹

Tayloe also built a new merchant mill in 1771 to replace the older ones built during the 1750s and 1760s. Lawson worried that the mill was taking too long to complete, and complained that "Chapman the Millwright has had so many other Jobs on hand . . . [that have] prevented him giving the attention to the building of ours, that I could have wished." Lawson was pleased with the quality of the mill's construction, but surprised at the inconveniences of building a new facility: "I could not have thought that the building of such a mill would have taken up so much time, nor have employed so many hands as it has already done, the difficulty in getting stones & the quantity the walls have taken & of lime also would surprise any one."¹²⁰

Severe weather wreaked further havoc on the ironworks. In the spring of 1772, Neabsco Creek flooded after a thunderstorm, and the waters carried away the main furnace and mill dams. Tayloe apologized to William Lee, a merchant associate in London, for the small amounts of iron he had sent. "[I] am sorry Iron sell no better tho at present I have non[e] owe[in]g to looseing my Neabsco dam, which is now repairing."¹²¹ The fall of 1775 brought a series of thunderstorms to the region which again flooded the

¹¹⁹Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, September 24, 1775, File 171.

¹²⁰Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, October 27, 1771, File 171.

¹²¹John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, to William Lee, Esquire, Merchant in London, June 15, 1773, William Lee Papers, VHS.

creek. Lawson had replaced the dams destroyed in 1772 with tumbling dams and flood gates that could more easily withstand the force of flood waters. He felt “lucky, very lucky” that the works “did not undergo the fate of March 1772.” Unfortunately, however, “The Occoquan furnace and saw Mill dams both gave way at their weakest places,” although they were quickly repaired.¹²² Unexpectedly cold weather could have an adverse effect on shipping the iron. In 1774, Tayloe informed Lee that his latest shipment of iron was “unluckily” delayed by frost.¹²³

The uncertainties of trans-Atlantic shipping also plagued Tayloe’s enterprises throughout his lifetime. Between 1757 and 1774, Tayloe lost at least 369 tons of pig iron and 182 hogheads of tobacco while they were in transit to England.¹²⁴ Tayloe’s bookkeepers frequently noted “lost” or “taken” shipments, although they did not usually explain the circumstances of each ship’s misfortune. Some of Tayloe’s shipments may have fallen victim to international rivalries while others were simply lost at sea. One occasion when this nearly happened occurred in June of 1772. Tayloe had placed 25 tons of pig iron on board Captain Fox’s vessel *Matty*. At Norfolk, Fox’s ship “sprung a leak,” delaying Tayloe’s shipment to William Lee.¹²⁵ Prudently, Tayloe usually divided his annual shipments of both iron and tobacco between numerous vessels. However, in some

¹²²Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, September 24, 1775, File 171.

¹²³John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, to William Lee, Esquire, Merchant in London, March 25, 1774, William Lee Papers, VHS.

¹²⁴See note 31 and Table 6 above.

¹²⁵John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, to William Lee, Esquire, Merchant in London, June 28, 1772, William Lee Papers, VHS.

years, such as 1773 when all 76 tons of his pig iron were lost, such precautions failed to protect Tayloe's interests.

The American Revolution provided a whole array of new opportunities and challenges to Tayloe and his ironworks. As early as September of 1775, Tayloe began supplying James Hunter's Fredericksburg Rappahannock Forge "with a sufficiency of Pig Iron."¹²⁶ Hunter was one of several ironmakers who focused their forging activities on the manufacturing of arms and munitions before and during the Revolution. Tayloe himself produced military equipment on behalf of the American cause, and was paid £705.8.3 for "sundry cannon Ball, plank, and Pigg Iron furnished for the Navy in Portsmouth" in June of 1776. He also supplied the Prince William County militia in 1778 with "sundry tools" for £21.¹²⁷ These are a few of the many instances of Tayloe's participation in the revolutionary cause before his death in 1779. War production revived business at Tayloe's works during the late 1770s and early 1780s. The Prince William County works produced at least 104 tons in 1777, 189 in 1778, 313 in 1780, and 269 tons in 1782. In 1782 alone, Tayloe received over £1000 for his pig iron.¹²⁸

The war brought Tayloe new business opportunities, but also increased the risks associated with operating an ironworks. As early as 1775, rumors circulated regarding sightings of British vessels in the Chesapeake Bay, and Lawson admitted to Tayloe, "I am every day in dread of hearing that Cutters are in the Bay and Rivers and will seize our

¹²⁶Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, September 24, 1775, File 171.

¹²⁷Palmer, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 8: 195; "Virginia Militias in the Revolution," VMHB 15 (June 1908), 92.

¹²⁸See note 31; William Lawson Deposition, March 11, 1789, File 171.

vessels. If this should ever be the case, farewell all Virginia Iron Works.”¹²⁹ Lawson’s fears materialized. Tayloe nearly lost one of his schooners in 1777, but Captain Grant of the *Betty* “very luckily escaped from a M of war, which chased and fired two shots at him as he came down the Bay.” William Lawson recalled that by 1780, “the Navigation of the Bay and Rivers afterwards came to be shut up” because so many vessels had been taken or lost.¹³⁰ Tayloe experienced such a loss in 1781, when the British seized “a vessel loaded with 100 barrels of corn . . . from Nanjamy [Nanjemoy, Maryland]” on Port Tobacco Creek.¹³¹ Such conditions made it difficult to import the necessary iron ore from the Maryland ore banks, as the “hazard & risque attending the same during the war in all probability [kept] the owners & managers from attempting it.”¹³² Tayloe managed by occasionally risking those trips and by using the lower-quality ore deposits locally available on his Neabsco lands.

Tayloe experienced a final familiar problem during the Revolution. Commissioners examining various estate settlement issues for Tayloe’s executors explained the situation: “It must be well remembered that during this time [late 1770s] our Rivers & bays were often infested by the British Vessels and that our Slaves were

¹²⁹Thomas Lawson, Neabsco, to John Tayloe, September 24, 1775, File 171.

¹³⁰Thomas Lawson to John Tayloe, November 20, 1777, File 171; William Lawson Deposition, March 11, 1789, File 171. For a good discussion of the impact of the Revolution on Virginia’s economy, see, Sylvia R. Frey, Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age (Princeton, 1991), Chapter 5.

¹³¹Henry Lee to Governor Thomas Jefferson, April 9, 1781, in Palmer, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 2: 21-23.

¹³²“Special Report by the Commissioners,” File 171.

escaping to them by every Opportunity.”¹³³ The British began blockading the Chesapeake Bay in 1777, and increasing numbers of slaves fled to British ships and patrols. The British welcomed the runaways and even put them to work in various capacities. British fleets returned to harass the Chesapeake during the spring of 1778, summer of 1779, and fall of 1780, but the region sustained the worst damage—to the tune of approximately three million pounds sterling—in 1781 when the British Army “raged in Virginia” for over six months.¹³⁴ At least four of Tayloe’s slaves grasped for freedom during the Revolution. In June of 1776, Landon Carter noted that two of Tayloe’s slaves attempted to make a getaway in one of his sloops. Two years later, another slave, Old Dick, was recaptured after fleeing.¹³⁵

During 1781, a mulatto slave named Bill belonging to Tayloe’s ironworks was indicted for “‘Treason,’ in aiding and abetting, and feloniously and traiterously waging & levying war against the Commonwealth, in conjunction with divers enemies of the same, in an armed vessell.” Bill apparently convinced the court that he had not volunteered to join the enemy forces. Instead, he claimed “he was taken in an oyster boat and forced agst. his will, and that he never took up arms agst. the Country, and [that there was] no Positive Proof that he certainly did aid or assist the Enemy, of his own free will.” The court condemned Bill to death by hanging, but Governor Jefferson pardoned him shortly before his scheduled execution. Bill’s story and Judge Henry Lee’s argument that “a

¹³³*Ibid.* Thomas Jefferson estimated (probably overestimated) that Virginia lost 30,000 slaves in 1781 alone. See Frey, *Water from the Rock*, 211 n. 22.

¹³⁴Frey, *Water from the Rock*, 143-152, 210-211.

¹³⁵Jack P. Greene, *The Diary of Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778* (Charlottesville, 1965), 2: 1049; JT Account Book, 1776-1786, TFP, 2: 310.

Slave . . . cannot commit Treason agst. the State, not being admitted to the Priviledges of a Citizen, [he] owes the State no Allegiance,” apparently swayed Jefferson’s opinion in favor of the defendant.¹³⁶

In 1779, John Tayloe II died, and left both ironworks to his son, John Tayloe III. Only eight years old at the time of his father’s death, the younger Tayloe would play no part in his father’s numerous enterprises until the 1790s. Thomas Lawson dutifully stayed on at Neabsco until his own death in 1785, although his “being rather infirm” prevented him from attending to the business in his usual competent manner.¹³⁷ Over the course of four decades, John Tayloe II had constructed a multi-faceted industrial complex out of a small rural iron furnace. Altogether, Tayloe founded and managed two furnaces, a forge, several profitable mills, an active shipbuilding enterprise, and merchant and landlord investments--an extremely valuable and profitable estate. The Occoquan Company alone was valued at over £20,000, and Tayloe’s total holdings in Prince William County likely were worth at least double that amount. These industrial activities had allowed Tayloe to reduce his dependence on the tobacco market while simultaneously shielding him from the worst effects of tobacco market fluctuation. Tayloe certainly could neither have built nor worked such enterprises on his own. Without the oversight and knowledge of nearly 200 white wage laborers, indentured servants, and hired and owned slaves, a business empire such as Tayloe’s would not have been possible. Slaves were central to all aspects of Tayloe’s enterprises, and his success proves that industrial

¹³⁶ CVSP, 2: 90-93.

¹³⁷ Will of John Tayloe II, 1779, TFP, 5: 168-172; William Holburne Deposition, May 10, 1798, File 171; Richard Parker Deposition, March 20, 1798, File 171.

slavery was possible and profitable. Finally, Tayloe did not run the biggest or most renowned ironworks in the Chesapeake, nor, perhaps, was he the most astute planter-businessman to engage in such activities, but his experiences prove that colonial planters understood and acted upon the value and potential of economic diversification and entrepreneurialism.

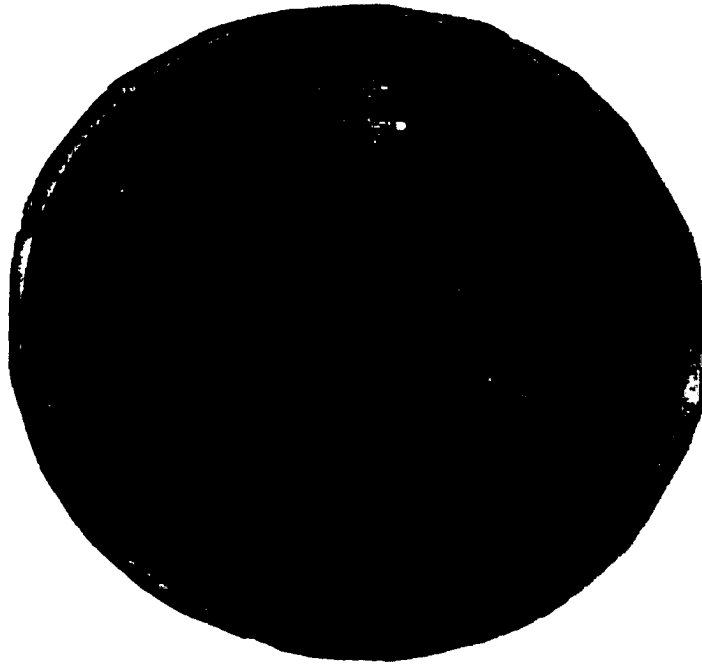
CHAPTER IV

ADJUSTMENTS AT MOUNT AIRY: JOHN TAYLOE III, THE ENTREPRENEUR

John Tayloe III, only son of John Tayloe II, was a child when his father died in April of 1779. Ralph Wormeley III, the younger Tayloe's brother-in-law, assumed responsibility for properly raising and educating young John to handle the responsibilities inherent in an estate as large, complex, and diversified as the Tayloes'. Wormeley, briefly a Councillor and himself the son of a prominent planter-businessman, remained loyal to the British Crown during the American Revolution, and he sent John Tayloe III to England to be educated at Eton and Cambridge. Thus, no Tayloe patriarch played a central role in the Revolution or the birth of the new nation. Instead, young Tayloe spent the years between 1780 and 1791 studying and traveling abroad. In his absence, fully eleven executors appointed by the elder Tayloe managed various parts of the large estate and attempted to settle accounts and collect outstanding debts, a process that extended over more than 40 years. John Tayloe III returned to Virginia in 1791 and married Anne Ogle, daughter of the governor of Maryland, the following year.¹

¹Richard S. Dunn, "A Tale of Two Plantations: Slave Life at Mesopotamia in Jamaica and Mount Airy in Virginia, 1799-1828," William and Mary Quarterly (hereafter WMQ) 3d ser., 36 (January 1977), 35; "The Tayloe Home: Mount Airy in Richmond County and its History," in the Edward Dickinson Tayloe Scrapbook, Virginia Historical Society (hereafter VHS). Ralph Wormeley was one of eleven men Tayloe appointed as an executor in his will, John Tayloe II Will, July 5, 1779, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Reel 5, Frames 168-172. A large part of the Tayloe Family Papers at the VHS have been microfilmed as part of the Records of Ante-Bellum Southern Plantations, Series M, Part 1: The Tayloe Family. These papers will hereafter be expressed as TFP, Reel: Frame, to distinguish them from Tayloe family collections that are not part of the microfilm collections located at the VHS and other repositories. For other descriptions of Wormeley, see "Character of Leading Men & Descriptions of Places in Virginia Given to the Commander

FIGURE 9



**John Tayloe III (1771-1828), Engraving by Charles de Saint Memin
University of Virginia**

When he returned to Virginia, John Tayloe III faced challenges similar to those his grandfather had encountered as he started his own career--both men had to adjust and adapt to extensive changes within Virginia's economy. Whereas John Tayloe I came of age in the midst of a severe depression in the tobacco market that induced early planters to commit to diversification, John Tayloe III returned to assume control of the Tayloe family estate in a still unstable post-revolutionary society and economy. The Revolution significantly changed many aspects of Virginia's politics, economy, and culture. Perhaps foremost among these changes was the decline of the tobacco culture. While the market in tobacco resumed after the war, the tobacco colonies no longer received the many benefits and protections formerly available to them from Great Britain. Inflated consumer prices, depreciated currency, limited credit, the republican distrust of debt, and British indignation were some of the circumstances that combined to reduce production and exportation of the crop during the post-revolutionary era.² The Revolution thus accelerated and in some regions even concluded the move towards the "culture of wheat," as Thomas Jefferson deemed it, which had begun as early as the 1730s.³

in Chief," 1775, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (hereafter CWF), Research Files, original in Toronto Public Library, Peter Russell Collection; "Dunmore's Virginia Councillors," CWF, Research Files.

²T.H. Breen, Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution (Princeton, 1985), 204-210; Jean B. Russo, "A Model Planter: Edward Lloyd IV of Maryland, 1770-1796," William and Mary Quarterly [hereafter WMQ] 3d ser., 49 (January 1992), 67; John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, The Economy of British America, 1607-1789 (Chapel Hill, 1985), 361; Gerald W. Mullin, Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia (London, 1972), 125-126; John T. Schlotterbeck, "Plantation and Farm: Social and Economic Change in Orange and Green Counties, Virginia, 1716-1860," unpublished dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1980, 1-2; Louis Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall: A Virginia Planter of the Eighteenth Century (Charlottesville, Va., 1965), 131, 164.

³William Peden, ed., Notes on the State of Virginia, by Thomas Jefferson [hereafter Jefferson's Notes] (New York, 1982), 168. T. H. Breen coined the phrase "tobacco culture" to refer to Virginians' shared beliefs that tobacco made the most suitable use of the colony's lands and best represented Virginians' sense of value and moral worth. Using his characterization, it is not too much of a stretch to say that wheat, and

Wheat culture encompassed more than a shift to the cultivation of wheat--it was a cultural and economic transformation that sealed planter-businessmen's commitment to agricultural diversification and business enterprise in Virginia. Thus, planters typically devoted parts of their acreage to hemp, flax, cotton, and indigo, as well as to the more common wheat and corn. In some areas, planters gradually phased out cultivation of tobacco altogether, which seems to be the case with the third John Tayloe by the second decade of the nineteenth century.⁴ Simultaneously, planters placed greater emphasis on household manufactures, industry, and internal improvements that would facilitate an interior trade. Many wartime industries continued to grow after the war, while agricultural processing industries, such as milling, expanded because of changes the war wrought on Virginia's economy. The iron industry, which had its roots in Virginia's earliest years, experienced something of a renewal during the Revolution, as ironmasters founded new forges and furnaces to produce weapons and other supplies for the patriot cause (see Appendix 2).⁵

everything it represented, slowly achieved a culture of its own during the early national period. Breen, Tobacco Culture, 253

⁴Jefferson predicted that "when the cultivation of tobacco . . . [is] discontinued," cotton would replace it in the eastern part of Virginia while hemp and flax would take its place in the west. Jefferson's Notes, 168. On the impact and spread of wheat, see also Breen, Tobacco Culture, 204-205; Mullin, Flight and Rebellion, 125; Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 140-142, 178; Schlotterbeck, "Plantation and Farm," 1; Richard H. Abbott, "Yankee Farmers in Northern Virginia, 1840-1860," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography (hereafter VMHB) 76 (1) (1968), 56-57.

⁵Mullin, Flight and Rebellion, 87-88, 125-126; Thomas M. Preisser, "Alexandria and the Evolution of the Northern Virginia Economy, 1749-1776," VMHB 89 (1981), 293; William H. Siener, "Economic Development in Revolutionary Virginia: Fredericksburg, 1750-1810," unpublished dissertation, The College of William and Mary, 1982; Joyce Chaplin, An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815 (Chapel Hill, 1993), 331; Robert S. Starobin, Industrial Slavery in the Old South (New York, 1970), 10 and *passim*; Frances C. Robb, "Industry in the Potomac River Valley, 1760-1860," unpublished dissertation, West Virginia University, 1991, 11-12 and *passim*.

The third John Tayloe's commitment to both agriculture and industry in the early national period represents the culmination of planter-businessman culture in early Virginia. By the Revolution, all men of sufficient means moved to diversify their holdings and interests. Indeed, men at all levels of the social ladder pursued this entrepreneurial spirit in the decades during and after the Revolution. However, a new trend was slowly emerging. The generation of Virginians who lived during the half-century after the Revolution were among the last of the great planter-businessmen. Whereas John Tayloe I lived during a time when planters began to take on the planter-businessman role, John Tayloe III lived through another transition in upper-class identity--the movement towards economic specialization. As the infant republic formed new ideas about manufacturing, industrialization, sectional differences, and slavery, the integrated multiple roles planter-businessmen formerly played often broke down into specialization.⁶

Increasingly, planters returned to an agricultural focus, which in many cases still included related household manufactures and processing industries. Businessmen, on the other hand, turned their attention to more strictly business and industrial endeavors--ironworks, mercantile firms, and textile factories, for example. In many cases, these newer versions of businesses which had long existed in Virginia were founded and operated in a new geographical setting--growing cities such as Richmond, Norfolk, and Baltimore. In colonial Virginia, planters were among the most sophisticated businessmen, and most businessmen were also members of the planter class. In early

⁶Walter Licht describes specialization as a nationwide phenomenon during the early-nineteenth century. Walter Licht, *Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1995), 5, 15, 33.

national Virginia, the two roles began to diverge, and by the middle four decades of the nineteenth century, planters and businessmen more often than not pursued separate, specialized interests. Fred Bateman as well as other historians have found that few manufacturers anywhere in the antebellum South were also planters, and only a small number of planters operated any type of industrial enterprise.⁷

In the midst of all the changes and transformations characteristic of the early national period, John Tayloe III was a true entrepreneur. Successful entrepreneurs had to be innovative, speculative, flexible, knowledgeable, and willing to take risks. Some historians would argue that southern planters lacked any of these characteristics, but Tayloe repeatedly demonstrated his business acumen and vision.⁸ Tayloe effectively assessed the changing economic tide of the 1790s and early 1800s and reoriented his

⁷Fred Bateman, James Foust, and Thomas Weiss, "The Participation of Planters in Manufacturing in the Antebellum South," Agricultural History 48 (April 1974), 282-288. See also Peter Parish, "The Edges of Slavery in the Old South: Or, Do Exceptions Prove Rules?" Slavery and Abolition 4 (2) (1983), 113-117; Angela Lakwete, "A Southern Model of Industrialization: The Case of the Antebellum Cotton Gin Manufacturing Industry," research seminar paper #12 presented to the Center for the History of Business, Technology, and Society, March 1998, 6-47; S. Sydney Bradford, "The Negro Ironworker in Ante Bellum Virginia," Journal of Southern History (hereafter JSH) 25 (2) (May 1959), *passim*; Lacy K. Ford, "The Tale of Two Entrepreneurs in the Old South: Johns Springs III and Hiram Hutchison of the South Carolina Upcountry," South Carolina Historical Magazine 95 (3) (July 1994), 201; T. Stephen Whitman, "Industry Slavery at the Margin: The Maryland Chemical Works," JSH 59 (1) (February 1993), 33. Ronald Lewis points out that while southern planters did not often become businessmen, they did often invest in that industrial expansion that did occur. Ronald Lewis, Coal, Iron, and Slaves: Industrial Slavery in Maryland and Virginia, 1715-1865 (Westport, Conn., 1979), 3.

⁸For definitions of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurialism, see Stuart Bruchey, "Success and Failure Factors: American Merchants in Foreign Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," Business History Review 32 (1958), 272-292; Rudolf Braun, "The Rise of a Rural Class of Entrepreneurs," Journal of World History 10 (1967), 557; Edwin Perkins, "The Entrepreneurial Spirit in Colonial America: The Foundations of Modern Business History," Business History Review 63 (1) (Spring 1989), 169-170; David Curtis Skaggs, "John Semple and the Development of the Potomac River Valley, 1750-1773," VMHB 92 (3) (1984), 307-308. Thomas Doerflinger is among the most recent of historians who deny that southern planters in the revolutionary era exhibited entrepreneurial characteristics. Entrepreneurial characteristics "were not much in evidence on the great southern plantations. Decade after decade of sowing and reaping had fixed blinders on the southern businessman. Having so long left marketing, finance, shipping, and manufacturing primarily to European and Yankee capitalists, the planter was not readily disposed to enter these fields." Thomas M. Doerflinger, A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia (Chapel Hill, 1986), 346-347.

agricultural and business endeavors to fit the new situation. When he took possession of his estate in 1791, Tayloe owned over 500 slaves and thirteen plantations dispersed over ten Virginia and Maryland counties. The Mount Airy and Charles County, Maryland, plantations were the most significant in terms of agricultural production, and the main crops grown on these plantations included tobacco, wheat, and corn. His farms further produced large quantities of pork and beef intended for local markets. Tayloe also inherited two ironworks in Prince William County, which produced little iron and suffered from resource depletion by the turn of the century. Tayloe quickly made some important changes to his estate. Over the course of a decade, he focused his agricultural production almost exclusively on grains, slowly reducing the acreage he dedicated to tobacco.

Simultaneously, Tayloe recognized that the family ironworks, Neabsco and Occoquan, were long past their peak because of depleted resources. He therefore began slowly to dismantle the old iron plantations, holding onto only those lands that could be used productively in other enterprises. In that vein, he invested in internal improvements cutting through the old ironworks lands. For example, he owned two stage lines that regularly traveled through northern Virginia, and he established hotels and ordinaries on his lands along the stagecoach route. Tayloe did not give up on the iron industry, however. At the same time that the Tidewater iron industry was aging, a new locus of the industry arose in western Virginia, where ore deposits and mines were larger and more plentiful. Almost immediately Tayloe began assessing what opportunities might exist in Virginia's western iron industry, and purchased the Cloverdale and Brunswick Ironworks in Botetourt County when they became available. Tayloe identified another

transformation in early national society as well: the creation and expansion of urban areas. Tayloe's interest in city life was partly personal and partly based on considerations of business. His wife, Anne Ogle Tayloe, was accustomed to living in the city. Her father had long lived in the former economic hub of Annapolis as governor of Maryland. Thus, Tayloe's cosmopolitan upbringing in Britain and his wife's family connections in Maryland's capital cemented the young couple's interest in the politics, opportunities, and social and cultural events characteristic of urban areas. Indeed, one of Tayloe's most entrepreneurial moves was to build a mansion in the fledgling federal city of Washington before it was even clear that the government would accept its new home.

At just twenty years of age, John Tayloe III assumed managerial responsibility for his large Virginia and Maryland estates and began to build a name for himself in Virginia's political community. During the 1790s, he purchased numerous plantations as well as smaller tracts bordering his current lands. In 1794 he purchased Spring Hill in King George County, including 877 acres, and the following year he bought the neighboring Hopyard plantation, which contained 484 acres.⁹ In 1797, Tayloe gambled on Washington City's future prosperity when he purchased lot number eight on square 170 at George Washington's urging.¹⁰ Tayloe quickly began construction on a city mansion that today remains as one of the most prominent and impressive examples of Federal architecture. In 1798, Tayloe purchased 238 additional King George County acres to better consolidate his holdings there. Soon afterward, he brought Menokin

⁹Fredericksburg Deed Book B: 122; King George County Deed Book 8: 38.

¹⁰Gustavus Scott to John Tayloe, April 19, 1797, District of Columbia Land Court Records [hereafter DCLCR], 1797 Deed, Liber B, Vol. 2, Document 1.

plantation in Richmond County back into his family's estate. John Tayloe II had built the mansion and thousand-acre plantation during the 1760s as a wedding gift to the younger Tayloe's sister Rebecca and her husband, Francis Lightfoot Lee. During the late 1790s, the Lees died without issue, and Tayloe reclaimed the estate for the family in 1799.¹¹ Tayloe filled in adjoining tracts totaling almost 1,400 acres all around his estate during the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century.¹² Tayloe also purchased two other major plantations. In 1801, he bought Doctor's Hall in Richmond County, including 695 acres, and in 1805 another named Oaken Brow, situated in King George County and consisting of 1,200 acres.¹³

These latter two purchases became part of the "Mt. Airy Department"--which included the ten plantations situated over a thirty-mile stretch along both sides of the Rappahannock River in the Northern Neck: Mt. Airy, Old House, Fork(land), Doctor's Hall, Marske (or Mask), Menokin (all in Richmond County), Gwinfield (Essex County), Hopyard, Spring Hill, and Oaken Brow (all in King George County). Tayloe ran all of his plantations as interdependent and interconnected parts of a larger whole, shifting slaves, crop seed, and other resources between them as necessary. This was especially true of the closely situated Mt. Airy farms. In addition to these agricultural plantation purchases, Tayloe made a huge investment in 1810 in two western iron plantations, Cloverdale Furnace and Brunswick Forge, in Botetourt County, including 4,523.6 acres valued at

¹¹Richmond County Deed Book 17: 262, 297.

¹²Prince William County Deed Book 1: 163; Richmond County Deed Book 17: 445, 450, 18: 323, 325, 19: 32, 208; TFP, 5: 595.

¹³Richmond County Deed Book 17: 433; TFP, 5: 617-618; King George County Deed Book 9: 131.

more than £21900 Virginia currency.¹⁴ Simultaneously, he turned his attention to the opportunities present in the region's small towns and growing cities. Between 1797 and 1817, Tayloe purchased a total of 31 town lots in Washington City, Occoquan, and Richmond Courthouse.¹⁵

Tayloe thus added an additional 10,500 acres to his estate in his first two decades of management. However, his ability to identify what was generally unproductive in his own estate was as important to his success as his ability to recognize good opportunities. Thus, many of Tayloe's first managerial decisions dealt with selling off unproductive or underutilized lands across his estate. The bulk of Tayloe's land sales came from his Neabsco and Occoquan Ironworks in Prince William County. Neabsco had always belonged solely to the Tayloe family. But Tayloe only gained full control of Occoquan in the mid-1790s when Presly Thornton of Northumberland County relinquished his quarter share in the works in exchange for being released from any outstanding company debts.¹⁶ Resource depletion and the new competition from the western iron industry meant that Tayloe had to rid himself of all unnecessary lands. Therefore, between 1793 and 1813, when his western works had been in operation for several years, Tayloe sold over 2,500

¹⁴Botetourt County Deed Book 19: 179, 205, 208; TFP, 5: 647.

¹⁵Gustavus Scott to John Tayloe, April 19, 1797; Jonah Thomson and Richard Veich to John Tayloe, January 21, 1803, DCLCR, 1804 Deed, Liber K, Vol. 10, Document 7, p. 150/162; William Holburne to John Tayloe, March 17, 1805, DCLCR, 1806 Deed, Liber O, Vol. 14, Document 9, p. 385/287; Richmond County Deed Book 18: 334, 19:179, 205; TFP, 5: 604, 614-615; Henry Lee to John Tayloe, August 31, 1807, DCLCR, 1807 Deed, Liber S, Vol. 18, Document 13, p. 152/124; 1756-1799 Legal Documents, Letters, Box 1, Folder 1, Tayloe Family Papers, University of Virginia [hereafter UVA], 38-630; James McCormick to John Tayloe, August 17, 1811, DCLCR, 1811 Deed, Liber AB, Vol. 27, Document 18, p. 93/76; Prince William County Deed Liber 5: 270, 283; Charles Glover and Richard Forrest to John Tayloe, November 10, 1815, DCLCR, 1815 Deed, Liber AK, Vol. 35, Document 22, p. 120/93.

¹⁶Agreement, December 10, 1794, and Statement of P.P. Thornton Account, no date, Fredericksburg Court Records, File 171; TFP, 5: 592.

acres of his Prince William County holdings, decreasing the size of the older ironworks by over a quarter. As Cloverdale and Brunswick became more productive, Tayloe sold off another 3,900 acres before he died.¹⁷ Tayloe also reshaped the family estate in another important way. In 1793, he sold the 4,000-acre Ketockton tract in Loudoun County which his father had subdivided into 150-acre lots for leasing. His efforts to consolidate and focus his landed estate provided him with well over £20,000 Virginia currency with which to finance other endeavors.

At the same time he was building up his landed estate, John Tayloe III began to make a name for himself in the political arena. In 1794, he volunteered to lead a regiment of the 14th Light Dragoons against the insurgents in western Pennsylvania in what became known as the Whiskey Rebellion. The Whiskey Rebellion erupted in the Pennsylvania backcountry when the Washington administration levied an excise tax on liquor.¹⁸ Tayloe, along with his body servant Archy, was “out with his troops” during the winter of 1794-1795.¹⁹ This experience whetted Tayloe’s appetite for the military leadership roles which he pursued throughout his political career. George Washington appointed Tayloe as a Major in the Light Dragoons in 1799, and during 1807 Tayloe offered his services as Dragoon officer to the Virginia Governor. Tayloe wrote, “If you will confer on me the appointment of Lt-Col Commandant of a Regiment of Volunteer

¹⁷Prince William County Deed Liber Y: 484, 618, 621, 623, 732, Z: 112, 1: 57, 2: 306, 4: 88, 5: 189, 781, 799, 11:258, 352, 369, 513; TFP, 5: 602, 751-752, 762.

¹⁸For more information on the Whiskey Rebellion, see Thomas P. Slaughter, The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution (New York, 1986).

¹⁹William Holburne, Mt. Airy, to Mr. W. Lorman, Merchant, Baltimore, September 22, 1794, Tayloe Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society [hereafter VHS]; Tayloe’s manager William Holburne mentioned that Tayloe reported favorably on his servant Archy’s performance under fire: “I assure you, Archy stands cool.” William Holburne, Mt. Airy, to R.W. Carter, Sabine Hall, November 20, 1794.

Cavalry, to be styled 'The Northern Neck Volunteer Dragoons,' I will pledge myself to have *recruited, mounted, regimentalled and equipt in every respect at my own expense* (if it does not exceed \$4,000) ten full Troops of Horse." It is unclear whether the Governor took Tayloe up on this offer, but it does appear Tayloe's persistence paid off in the form of some sort of high-ranking commission.²⁰

Tayloe's interest in military leadership was matched by his interest in politics. During the 1790s, Tayloe served as a Federalist Delegate and State Senator for Richmond County. Tayloe also had political aspirations in the national arena; he ran unsuccessfully as a Federalist for Congress during the Election of 1800.²¹ These experiences provided Tayloe with important contacts for future business ventures and speculations.

Tayloe's agricultural, business, and other investment activities can be roughly divided into their rural and urban settings. Although Tayloe himself likely saw no such strict division between his various business enterprises. In his rural estate, Tayloe made significant changes that maintained the plantations' profitability and durability in the face of massive economic change. Tayloe was a hands-on manager who insisted on being involved in and kept abreast of everything around his landed estate. He experimented with new crops, steadily replaced tobacco with the more productive and profitable grains, established and expanded a variety of plantation industries, and extensively leased

²⁰George Washington, Mount Vernon, to John Tayloe, Esqr., January 23, 1799, Rensselaer County Historical Society, Library/Archive Collection; John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, to the Governor, July 7, 1807, October 20, 1807, October 29, 1807, in William P. Palmer, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts [hereafter CVSP] (New York, 1968), 9: 534, 604, 608; John C. Van Horne and Lee W. Formwalt, eds., The Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe (New Haven, 1988), 2: 448-450, 451 n. 5.

²¹Orlando V. Ridout, Building the Octagon (Washington, DC, 1989), 11; "Samuel Ripley and the Tayloes," Tylers Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine 6 (1) (July 1924), 5.

underutilized lands to tenants. At the same time, Tayloe began living half of every year in the city--first with his wife's family in Annapolis, Maryland, during the 1790s, and then at his new mansion in Washington City, later called the Octagon, by late 1801. The Tayloes spent half of every year between their marriage in 1792 and their permanent removal to Washington City in 1817 enjoying the winter urban social and political scene. During those years, Tayloe invested in and managed some of the most cutting-edge businesses available during the early national period, such as internal improvement and transportation projects, banks and stocks, and hotels and taverns. Tayloe's entrepreneurialism allowed him to participate successfully in both the rural and urban worlds, and his activities in one area of business often supported and even financed his endeavors in others.

Between mid-1794 and the spring of 1795, someone at Mt. Airy conducted a series of "agricultural experiments" and reported the results to Tayloe. The writer of the unsigned memorandum, likely one of Tayloe's overseers, carefully recorded his method of planting, type of crops attempted, interaction of crops planted together, and overall output for each new crop type with which he experimented. At Mt. Airy, the experimenter investigated white wheat using a variety of planting techniques as well as corn, and found that larger grains of white wheat fared better than the smaller ones and that corn planted on ridges produced "a[l]most 51 prct" more corn. At Old House, the experimenter duplicated his results on corn and found that wheat also benefited from being planted in ridges. He also planted cotton, but had not yet completed his experiment with that crop. The unknown experimenter tried potatoes at Marske Plantation and discovered that not only would potatoes bring £4 more than corn for each acre planted,

but that potatoes improved the soil whereas corn depleted it. Finally, the experimenter planted crops of oats and clover, although he recorded no results for these crops.²² The activities of the unknown experimenter in agricultural crops represent Tayloe's commitment to agricultural diversification. While Tayloe's reaction to these experiments has not been preserved, his planting record confirms his interest in and approval of mixed-crop agriculture. Tayloe kept extensive records in account books and "crop books," which reveal his style of plantation management and commitment to diversification and commercial agriculture.

Between 1792 and 1823, Tayloe presided over agricultural production on his estate. Enlisting the help of numerous white overseers and masses of black slaves, he regularly planted corn, wheat, oats, peas, barley, cotton, potatoes, and rye. He also produced wool and brandy on a significant but more irregular basis and raised livestock for beef and pork. Tayloe dedicated most of his acreage to his four largest crops: wheat, corn, oats, and cotton. Gwinfield, Oaken Brow, and the Hopyard were Tayloe's three most productive plantations.²³ Between 1792 and 1823, Tayloe cultivated an impressive annual average of 6,548 bushels of wheat, 4,222 barrels of corn, 2,669 pounds of cotton, and 643 bushels of oats (see Table 7). He sold significant portions of all of his crops,

²²Agricultural Experiments, November 15, 1794, TFP, 55: 604-611.

²³The discussion of the third John Tayloe's agricultural production is based mostly on the following account book: Account Book, 1789-1828 (hereafter the "Cropbook"), TFP, 5: 830-910. While the Cropbook's records continued until 1828, the format significantly changed after 1818, probably as a result of Tayloe's handing over managerial responsibilities to his son upon his moving to Washington, DC. While the Cropbook itself is not complete for all crops in all years, the post-1818 records were less complete and reliable than records for the earlier years. Other receipts and account books include Amount of Crops Made and Sold at Old House, 1801-1812, Richmond County Plantation Records, TFP, 27: 989; John Tayloe III Accounts, 1800-1809, TFP, 6: 92-97; John Tayloe III Account Books, 1811, 1812, 1813, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS; John Tayloe III Account Book, 1791-1792, TFP, 2: 410-554; John Tayloe III Account Book, 1793-1800, TFP, 2: 555-836; Miscellaneous Plantation Records, TFP, 27: 488-545.

demonstrating his commitment to a commercial agriculture. For example, in 1802, Tayloe sold 78% of his wheat crop and 36% of his corn crop. Similarly, in 1808 and 1809, Tayloe sent to market 45% and 46% of his corn respectively. Remaining portions of each of these crops went to seeding, overseers' salaries, livestock feeding, and rations for the plantations.²⁴ Tayloe similarly marketed the bacon and pork produced from his large herds of hogs. In 1811, Tayloe oversaw the production of 14,216 pounds of bacon and 3,280 pounds of salted pork. Tayloe paid the overseers at the Fork, Doctor's Hall, and Marske 2,260 pounds of the pork produced, and intended to sell most of the remainder for a total of over £355 Virginia currency.²⁵

Numerous white and black workers labored under Tayloe's watchful management and made the extensive agricultural activity and plantation industry at Mt. Airy and elsewhere possible and successful. Tayloe regularly employed two managers and upwards of twenty white overseers. The two positions differed greatly in job responsibilities and social standing. Managers, or agents as they were often called, performed business for Tayloe on an estate-wide level. Tayloe's managers' responsibilities typically included supervising overseers and plantation labor requirements, the marketing of produce, corresponding with local business associates and more distant merchants, advertising for runaway slaves, and traveling between the plantations to deliver instructions, inspect the work underway, and transport supplies

²⁴John Tayloe III Accounts, 1800-1809, TFP, 6: 92-97.

²⁵John Tayloe III Account Book, January 1811, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS.

TABLE 7
ESTATE-WIDE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, 1792-1823²⁶

<i>Year</i>	<i>Bu. Wheat</i>	<i>Bbls. Corn</i>	<i>Lbs. Cotton</i>	<i>Bu. Oats</i>	<i>Gallons Brandy</i>	<i>Lbs. Wool</i>	<i>Bbls. Potatoes</i>	<i>Bu. Peas</i>	<i>Bu. Barley</i>	<i>Bu. Rye</i>
1792	2273	2015	1565	138						
1793	1607	2245	1237	531				12	103	
1794	5253	2143	1504	253				381	122	
1795	1893	2548	1500	913			45	263	75	32
1796	3477	2594	2283	823			548	191	145	25
1797	3702	2792	2059	735		299	380	158	150	85
1798	4960	4188	1018	357		336	34	248		
1799	4362	3619	2021	954		128	170	50	45	
1800	3442	3528	4713	567		278	280	75		
1801	4209	4275	2143	454		122		30		
1802	4634	4017	2822	536		96	100	83		
1803	10324	4956	4885	237		659		61		
1804	4840	4372	2782			212				
1805	1387	3744	2523	63		47				
1806	3076	4415	2750	2176						
1807	8056	5129	1319	1308	200	70				169
1808	8000	4300	1303	1243	668	375				90
1809	7706	5220	4797	190	619	482				370
1810	9762	5275	9375	871	489	341				
1811	10738	5206	2750	761	1098	969				
1812	8317	4814	1994	100	507	746				
1813	5876	8872	611	374	696	757				31
1814	5632	3898	2690	28	720	884				
1815	3693	4163	4328	545	467	1005				20
1816	8503	4496	3700	1830	696	604				
1817	6010	4349	723	100	350	300				
1818	7870	2895			84					
1819	11540	4911								
1820	15637	5167								
1821	11307	5981								
1822	10296	4471								
1823	11152	4497								
Average	6548	4222	2669	643	550	436	222	141	107	103

²⁶This table is based on the account books and other records cited in note 23.

and slaves. Each of the three Tayloe patriarchs had at least one trusted manager who served as his right-hand man.

In the third John Tayloe's case, managers were even more important because of his frequent infirmity beginning during the 1810s. Griffin Garland and William Holburne, both men who began their work under the second John Tayloe's supervision, served John Tayloe III simultaneously as managers for most of his life. By the end of his life, Tayloe also placed his managerial trust in Benjamin Boughton, who had begun as an overseer during the first decade of the nineteenth century. By 1827, Tayloe trusted Boughton to gather information on the Alexandria market, order estate-wide supplies, move slaves between the plantations as necessary to accomplish several critical tasks, and supervise several problematic overseers. Tayloe best described his relationship with these managers when he informed Boughton, "I rely on you--for all things."²⁷ Because Garland's lands bordered Tayloe's, Garland received about \$100 a year plus small monthly allowances of corn and oats as his salary. Holburne, on the other hand, leased Tayloe's plantation Marske beginning in 1797 for a mere "5 shillings per year while in Tayloe's employ and £ 10 currency if not."²⁸ Boughton also lived near enough to receive only a yearly salary, although Tayloe sold Boughton Menokin plantation in 1823 at a reasonable price and interest rate.²⁹

Overseers, on the other hand, supervised the daily operations of a particular plantation and were employed under a yearly contract. Overseers frequently received a

²⁷John Tayloe III to Benjamin Boughton, Neabsco, near Dumfries, Virginia, April 17, 1827, TFP, 5: 253.

²⁸John Tayloe Account Book, 1805-1812, TFP, 1: 191; Richmond County Deed Book 17: 260.

²⁹Richmond County Deed Book 21: 495; see also Menokin Mill Deed, TFP, 7: 108.

small boarding allowance or lived in an overseer's house on one of the plantation quarters. In addition, Tayloe paid his overseers, all of whom were white, a weekly ration of corn and oats as well as an annual portion of the crops produced at the various plantations. Tayloe annually divided between eight and fifteen per cent of his annual crops of corn and wheat between his numerous overseers on the Rappahannock Farms.³⁰ While planters required overseers to assist with daily management issues, they often disapproved of their overseers' behavior and management style. Tayloe was no exception. One extreme example of Tayloe's disapproval occurred in 1801, when he dismissed overseer John Kennedy (or Cannady) at the Fork, saying, "Your conduct of this morning has been so extraordinary in absenting yourself, particularly in the midst of the harvest--I have to inform you I have no further use for you as an Overseer--you will therefore prepare yourself to leave the plantation tomorrow . . . As I wish to have no misunderstanding with you, I shall be ready to pay your for your Services already rendered--which must cease with the close of this day."³¹

On another occasion, William Holburne admonished Hopyard overseer George Gresham about his means of punishing the slaves. "I must repeat what I told you before. Mr. Tayloe's wishes respecting his People: that they are to be well taken care of in Sickness & in health . . . & when correction is necessary, to give it in moderation."³² Tayloe so relied on his managers because he did not trust his overseers. He told

³⁰See, for example, John Tayloe Account Book, 1805-1812, TFP, 1: 191; John Tayloe III Accounts, 1800-1809, TFP, 6: 92, 94, 96, 97.

³¹John Tayloe, Mt. Airy, to Mr. Kennedy, Forkl[an]d Plantation, June 17, 1801, John Tayloe III Letterbook, May-July 1801.

³²William Holburne, Mount Airy, to George Gresham, Hopyard, March 15, 1809, John Tayloe III Letterbook, 1809, TFP, 1.

Holburne, "I wish the Overseers not too much to be intrusted without examination--I have but few of that Class worthy of it."³³

Overseers who did not live up to Tayloe's expectations did not last long on his estate. Most seem to have worked for Tayloe for a year or two at most. For example, William Harford worked at Menokin in 1800, Thomas Reynolds was overseer there by 1802, Francis Smith replaced Reynolds by 1804, and Cornelius Beazley held the job during 1807. Similar patterns existed at most of the plantations.³⁴ Tayloe attempted to ward off mismanagement by regularly providing detailed instructions to the overseers, such as the "General Order sent to the Overseers at the O[ld] House, D[octo]rs Hall, Gwinfield & Forkland" plantations in June of 1815, which dictated harvesting methods, rationing procedures, and slave work schedules.³⁵ His attempts won the praise of neighbor William Taliaferro: "I say with truth that I consider your Management on a farm, the best I have ever Seen."³⁶

The labor that Tayloe's slaves provided in all facets of plantation production was even more significant to the estate's success and profitability than his white workers' managerial work. Tayloe inherited approximately 500 slaves from his father. Between the 1790s and 1820s, Tayloe steadily increased his labor pool through new purchases and natural increase to include over 700 laborers. Slaves staffed the plantations in the Mt.

³³ John Tayloe, Mount Airy, to [William Holburne?], June 1, 1801, John Tayloe III Letterbook, May-July 1801.

³⁴ Cropbook, *passim*.

³⁵ "A General Order sent to the Overseers at the O'House, Drs Hall, Gwinfield & Forkland," June 18, 1815, Minute Book, 1813-1818, Southern Historical Collection, M1-4485.

³⁶ William Taliaferro to John Tayloe III, April 4, 1819, TFP, 5: 465.

Airy Department, the other Maryland and Virginia agricultural plantations, the Neabsco, Cloverdale, and Brunswick Ironworks, and the city house in Washington.

Many of Tayloe's slaves were skilled in craft or other industrial activities. Moreover, both male and female slaves held skilled or semi-skilled positions around Tayloe's estate. Whereas white craftsmen had held the supervisory or master craftsman positions in earlier periods, John Tayloe III most trusted his own highly experienced and knowledgeable slaves to perform the various skilled tasks and play supervisory roles. Tayloe's commitment to plantation crafts, industry, and business diversity meant that skilled craft or industrial slaves rarely performed any agricultural work at all since there was always plenty of non-agricultural work to keep them profitably employed. In those instances when work was slow at Mt. Airy, there were always neighbors willing to pay good money temporarily to employ one of Tayloe's skilled slaves. Tayloe hired out Thomas Jones, Stephen, Tom, and several other unnamed hands to assist his neighbors in their harvests during 1811. James worked for William Stanley on his wheat crop and oat ropewalk in March of 1814. William Stanley also hired a Tayloe slave named Sandy in October of 1814.³⁷

Tayloe conducted annual inventories of his slaves that reveal the variety of occupations and skills the slaves possessed. Inventories survive for fourteen of Tayloe's plantations between 1808 and 1828.³⁸ The earliest extant inventory from Mt. Airy

³⁷Tayloe hired out his slaves on a frequent but irregular basis. See, for example, John Tayloe III Account Book, 1811-1814.

³⁸John Tayloe III Inventory Book, 1808-1827, TFP, 6: 300-306. (Unless otherwise noted, all footnoted inventories are a part of this Inventory Book.) Tayloe likely began inventorying his slaves when he took over the estate in 1791. However the earlier inventory book no longer exists. Inventories continue until the Civil War, but those outside the chronological scope of this study have not been investigated by the author.

illustrates the variety of slaves' skills (see Table 8). Living and working at Mt. Airy in 1808 were four shoemakers, five blacksmiths, four joiners, three masons, twelve carpenters, seven jobbers, one waggoner, two ginners, two weavers, ten spinners, and four sailors, as well as their children.³⁹ Throughout the entire period, Mt. Airy's slave inhabitants were nearly all skilled in at least one plantation industry. Later Mt. Airy inventories grew to include dairy maids, laundresses, coachmen, grooms, jockeys (Tayloe was an avid and renowned horse racer), cooks, gardeners, hostlers, millers, and knitters.⁴⁰ At his ironworks, slaves held most of the critical skilled jobs. At Neabsco and Cloverdale, slaves worked as colliers, keepers, guttermen, ore burners, miners, smokers, blacksmiths, ship and house carpenters, sawyers, millers, weavers, spinners, sailors, and wheelwrights.⁴¹ Of Tayloe's approximately 700 slaves, at least 200—more than 25% of The large slave population—were skilled workers who rarely performed agricultural work.⁴²

Tayloe's 1805 Minute Book demonstrates the variety of skills slaves possessed and tasks they performed. Tayloe's regular notes provide a glimpse of slave life and work on a daily basis. The Mt. Airy Department slaves worked in the cold and heat, in

³⁹Mt. Airy Inventory, 1808.

⁴⁰Mt. Airy Inventories, 1809, 1811, 1815, 1816.

⁴¹Neabsco Inventory, 1825; List and Valuation of Property at Cloverdale Furnace, December 1, 1817, TFP, 27: 505-508.

⁴²This likely conservative figure is based on the 54 slaves in the Mt. Airy Inventory of 1808, the 41 in the Neabsco Inventory of 1825, and the 124 listed in the 1817 appraisal of the Cloverdale estate in Botetourt County. "List and Valuation of Property at Cloverdale Furnace," December 1, 1817, TFP, 27: 505-508. Richard Dunn, who has conducted extensive research on the nineteenth century Mt. Airy slave community, also noted the unusually high proportion of skilled and semi-skilled slaves at Mt. Airy. Dunn found that over 30% of all slaves able to work held some sort of skilled craft or industrial occupation. See Richard S. Dunn, "A Tale of Two Plantations: Slave Life at Mesopotamia in Jamaica and Mount Airy in Virginia, 1799-1828," *WMQ* 3d ser., 36 (January 1977), 32-65.

TABLE 8

SLAVE OCCUPATIONS AT MT. AIRY PLANTATION, 1808-1828

	<i>1808</i>	<i>1813</i>	<i>1818</i>	<i>1823</i>	<i>1827</i>
Blacksmith	5	5	5	4	1
Carpenter	12	10	13	2	3
Cook		2		2	2
Dairy Maid		2	1	2	2
Gardener		4	3	4	3
Ginner	2	2			
Hostler/Driver		2	5		3
House		4	6	5	5
Joiner	4	3	5		
Jobber	7	5	7		
Laundress		1		1	1
Mason	3	4	2		
Miller				2	2
Nurse				1	
Sailor	4				
Shoemaker	4	3	3		1
Spinner	10	12	13	4	3
Waggoner	1	1	1		
Weaver	2			1	
Other:	2 Hen				
Total Slaves:	56/77	60/78	64/96	28/43	26/63
% Skilled:	73%	77%	67%	65%	41%

rain and snow, and moved from plantation to plantation as needed to complete particular projects. Slave craftsmen worked year-round performing their skilled or semi-skilled jobs. One week's entry from January of 1805 illuminates the routines associated with slaves' craft work as well as Tayloe's commitment to diversification and business enterprise:

Monday, January 21, 1805--Mount Airy [a very cold Snow Storm]—Smiths about [H]opyard waggon. Joiners repairing Plantation ploughs. Mill dressing. Shoemakers mending peoples Shoes--mule waggon hauling wood part the day. &c &c

Tuesday, January 22, 1805--Mount Airy [Very Cold Day]--Smiths about [H]opyard waggon. Joiners hewing Ploughs Stocks. Getting up timber &c. Mill Grinding custom work. Shoemakers making coarse Shoes & mending Peoples Shoes. Mule waggon hauling wood, Jobbers cutting wood. Sailors Ditto. Works Carpenter Harry at Saw Mill.

Wednesday, January 23, 1805--Mount Airy [Still verry Cold]--Smiths at work on Hopyard waggon. Joiners making Ploughstock. Mule Irons my custom work. Shoe makers mending peoples Shoes. Mule waggon hauling wood and Straw to Stable. Jobbers cutting wood. Carpenter Harry at Saw Mill. Maisons raising stone.

Thursday, January 24, 1805--Mount Airy [Fine Day Overhead]--Smiths at work on Hopyard waggon. Joiners making Boxes for Green House. Mill Grinding custom work. Saw mill cutting Railing. Shoe makers mending Shoes. Jobbers cutting wood. Sailors Ditto. Mule Waggon hauling wood. Maisons raising Stone &c &c.

Friday, January 25, 1805--Mount Airy [Warm Day]--Smiths about Hopyard Waggon. Joiners making Boxes for Green House and getting up Timber. Mill Grinding custom work. Saw mill Cutting railing. Shoemakers making coarse Shoes. Mule Waggon hauling coal from Old House to Sm[ith] Shop. Jobbers Ditching at Old House. Sailors Cutting wood. Maisons raising Stone &c &c.

Saturday, January 26, 1805--Mount Airy [Rainy Day]--Gardeners Work Viz.--Cutting wood, water Green and hot Houses, making bean Sticks, Getting Broom Straw, &c.

Old House--Hands engaged taking down Fence. Getting Rails, beating out corn, Getting Wood, Stakes, Grubbing, attend to [live]Stock, &c &c.

Drs. Hall--Clearing a piece of wood in [unclear], manuring Clover lot, leveling ditches in Crondall field, 2 hands getting rails, attending to Stock, &c &c.

Forkland--Clearing up Swamp, getting Stakes, Carting Shucks to farm yard. Taking down Fence, Getting Wood, &c &c.

Marske--Sharpening & burning Stakes. Thrashing oats. Getting wood. Attending to Stock &c &c.

Menokin--Hauling and carting rails. Grubbing, Carting Straw to farm yard, attending to Stock &c &c.⁴³

The slave craftsmen gave life to Tayloe's entrepreneurialism. Their collective labor, talent, skill, and knowledge made an estate as large, diversified, and intricate as Tayloe's successful, profitable, and logistically possible.

Indeed, skilled slaves were so highly prized that Tayloe laid out specific instructions in his will for their distribution among his sons. "I give & bequeath to all my sons, all my tradesmen & Machanicks of every discription Such as Smiths, Carpenters, joiners, Wheelwrights[,] Shipcarpenters, masons, Shoemakers Etc[.] to be equally divded amongst them laying them out in lotts as equal as may be in value & number." Tayloe further instructed that his sons were to choose their slaves in order of seniority, and that all slave millers were to remain with the mills they ran at the various plantations.⁴⁴

Benjamin (called Ogle) chose slaves James, Henry, Tom Spence, and Billy Scofield from Mt. Airy, as well as Neabsco's Jim Nash, Lewis, shoemaker Joe Jr., and jobber Mark.

William chose blacksmiths, shoemakers, and masons from Mt. Airy, while Edward chose six skilled Neabsco slaves and only a handful of Mt. Airy slaves. Like William, Henry

⁴³John Tayloe III Minute Book, 1805, TFP, 1: 383-482.

⁴⁴John Tayloe III Will, 1828, TFP, 6: 407-434.

picked a variety of skilled slaves from Mt. Airy as well as Scipio and Edmond from Neabsco. George, who had expressed such an interest in the family's western ironworks that Tayloe changed his will to bequeath the works to him, chose all of his slaves from Cloverdale. Finally, Charles chose a half dozen Neabsco hands as well as several slave ship's captains.⁴⁵ All of the Tayloe men recognized the importance and value of the estate's skilled slaves, who almost single-handedly made possible the diversification and entrepreneurialism that characterized the white family's economic behavior.

With his managers', overseers', and slaves' assistance, Tayloe typically sent his produce in one of his own numerous ships to Hobb's Hole (later Tappahannock), Occoquan, Alexandria, or Norfolk, Virginia. Occasionally, he marketed his crops as far away as Georgetown, Baltimore, and New York.⁴⁶ Locally, Tayloe worked with numerous small-town and rural merchants. Tayloe sold tobacco he grew on his Nanjemoy plantation in Maryland to merchants in Port Tobacco. Tappahannock merchants regularly purchased wheat and corn produced at Gwinfield, Old House, and Hopyard. Further west, one merchant in Port Royal and another in Fredericksburg purchased corn, wheat, and tobacco from several of Tayloe's plantations.⁴⁷ Once Tayloe established himself in Washington, he formed a new business relationship with the city mercantile firm of Williams & Carrols. By the 1810s, Tayloe regularly entrusted Williams & Carrols to sell his corn crops profitably. Between 1812 and 1814 alone,

⁴⁵William Henry Tayloe Account Book, 1828-1841, TFP, 1: 92.

⁴⁶Cropbook, Section 45.

⁴⁷John Tayloe III Account Book, 1788-1790.

Tayloe sold almost 12,000 bushels of corn through the mercantile firm for more than \$6,000.⁴⁸

Tayloe would often provide his more distant merchant associates with specific instructions on how to sell his produce and what purchases he would like to make in return. In 1801, Tayloe's manager William Holburne sent Norfolk merchant Francis Smith the following instructions: "I send herewith by Capt. Darby 21 Bar[rels] Sup. Fine Flour--14 Fine Ditto & 7--Ship Stuff which be pleased to sell for Cash (unless it sh[oul]d appear a sacrifice to do so) pay yourself the Bal[ance] due you and for the Articles as p[er] enclosed list which I beg may be forwarded by the earliest conveyance to the care of Mr. L. Muse--Tapp[ahannoc]k--drop me a line at your next leisure with Acc[oun]t Sales cur[ren]t & the prices cur[ren]t at your market."⁴⁹ When Tayloe established a business relationship with Messrs. Silas Wood & Co. in Fredericksburg, he expected \$1 per bushel for his Hopyard and Oaken Brow crops of wheat, and suggested Wood market the crops in New York. Tayloe felt confident in his ability to negotiate such accommodations for his crops, since he thought that "the grain is uncommonly good at both places."⁵⁰

Tayloe also sold small and large quantities of corn, wheat, and other agricultural produce directly to neighbors and, once he became established in Washington, to new acquaintances in the city. By the 1810s, Tayloe was regularly selling grains directly to numerous city dwellers. One neighbor bought 17 barrels of corn worth \$73.25 in 1811.

⁴⁸John Tayloe III Account Book, 1813, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS.

⁴⁹William Holburne for John Tayloe, Mount Airy, to Francis Smith, Merchant, Norfolk, May 26, 1801, John Tayloe III Letterbook, May-July 1801, TFP, 5: 196-197.

⁵⁰John Tayloe, Washington, to Silas Wood & Co., Merchants, Fredericksburg, July 11, 1819, July 1, 1820, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS.

Another city resident, with whom Tayloe conducted other types of business as well,⁵¹ purchased 300 barrels of corn from Tayloe in 1811 for \$1,200, while a third bought 201 bushels of Neabsco wheat for \$298.15.⁵² Supplying his city neighbors with some of their basic food supplies was both profitable and convenient, since Tayloe regularly furnished his own home in the city with enough foodstuffs and other household products from the Mt. Airy Department to keep the household comfortable during the family's winter stay.⁵³

While Tayloe's records regarding his non-staple crops are generally consistent and complete, Tayloe makes little mention of tobacco throughout his business accounts. The earliest discussion of the crop occurs in the accounts shortly before Tayloe returned from London to reclaim his estate during the period between 1788 and 1790. The estate administrators frequently sold quantities ranging from two to thirty hogsheads to merchants in the Northern Neck region.⁵⁴ Account records from 1801 prove that Tayloe continued growing significant crops of tobacco at several of the plantations. In that year, he sold thirty hogsheads of tobacco, both stemmed and leaf, to William Murdock in London, and another thirty hogsheads to Robert Walker of Fredericksburg.⁵⁵ The latest mention Tayloe made of tobacco occurred in 1819. Tayloe's second son, Benjamin Ogle Tayloe, traveled to London in 1819, apparently at his father's expense. Tayloe paid

⁵¹Ann Kedglie purchased a slave from John Tayloe in April of 1810. John Tayloe to Ann Kedgelie, April 16, 1810, District of Columbia Land Court Records, 1810 Bill of Sale, Liber Y, Vol. 24, Document 102.

⁵²John Tayloe III Account Book, 1791-1792; John Tayloe III Account Book, 1811.

⁵³Minute Book, 1813-1818, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, M1-4485; "A list of Articles for Mrs. Tayloes City House in Washington Sent from the Rappahannock Farms by Capt. Haney," November 1828, TFP, 27: 513.

⁵⁴John Tayloe III Account Book, 1788-1790.

⁵⁵John Tayloe III Letterbook, various letters, July 1801.

Ogle's debts to London merchant William Murdock in October of 1819, but was unable to settle his own accounts completely at that time. He wrote, "As to my own Debt to you, I feel great mortification in saying I am unable just now, to remit the balance due but will do it at every sacrifice But as I have made a good Crop of Tobacco which I intend to ship you, so soon as it can be got ready I did suppose it could make no difference to a man of your immense fortune to be a little in advance for a Country man." In December, Tayloe reassured Murdock that his spring tobacco crop would not only pay off his debts but also leave a credit on Murdock's books.⁵⁶

There are several possible explanations for Tayloe's general silence on tobacco. First, as early as the 1790s, grains had assumed primacy over tobacco in acreage and value all around Tayloe's estate. Thus, Tayloe's infrequent mentions of the crop could reflect its diminishing importance in his annual income. Second, the lack of any mention of tobacco after 1819 could indicate either that Tayloe discontinued cultivating tobacco after that time, or, more likely, that in June of 1819, Tayloe began turning over management of his agricultural plantations to his sons. During 1817, Tayloe moved permanently into his residence in Washington City. Whereas he had previously moved back and forth between Mount Airy and the Octagon every six months, by 1817 he was a full-time absentee owner. His part-year presence at Mount Airy between the 1790s and 1817 allowed Tayloe to maintain his hands-on approach to plantation management.

⁵⁶John Tayloe, Washington, to William Murdock, Merchant of London, October 4, 1819 (emphasis original), December 10, 1819, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS.

However, Tayloe realized that his regular involvement was less realistic from his new seat in Washington.⁵⁷

Tayloe's large-scale cultivation of and commitment to grains promoted his profitable milling business. Tayloe's father and grandfather had owned and operated numerous grist, saw, and fulling mills during their lifetimes, and John Tayloe III continued this part of the family business. Tayloe owned at least five and possibly eight or more mills--two at Mt. Airy, one at Menokin, one or two at Neabsco, at least one and probably two in Botetourt County, and likely several others within the Mt. Airy Department. In 1810, Tayloe completed construction on a new grist mill not far from Mt. Airy.⁵⁸ Milling was a complex and intricate industrial activity that required technical knowledge and an entrepreneurial bent.⁵⁹ Tayloe's business records from the new mill's first year of operation indicate that he understood the business and profitably managed it.

Tayloe operated his mill as a merchant mill, meaning his neighbors could grind their grains at the Tayloe mill for a toll, usually between one-sixth and one-eighth of the grain ground. His customers were mostly neighbors and residents of the Northern

⁵⁷Tayloe gave part of Mount Airy to John Tayloe IV in June of 1819, TFP, 5: 610-611, Richmond County Deed Book 20: 595; Upper Nanjemoy to Benjamin Ogle Tayloe in January of 1823, Tayloe Family Papers, University of Virginia Alderman Library (hereafter UVA), Box 1, Folder 6; and Mount Airy, Old House, Marske, and Landsdown to William Henry Tayloe in May of 1825 upon John Tayloe IV's death, TFP, 5: 610-611, Richmond County Deed Book 22: 46.

⁵⁸Richmond County Deed Book 19: 32. The Richmond County Court in 1810 ordered Tayloe to compensate three of his neighbors for the six acres they collectively lost to flooding caused by Tayloe's mill dam.

⁵⁹John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill, 1985), 323-325; Thoams Berry, "The Rise of Flour Milling in Richmond," *VMHB* 18 (October 1970), 390; Licht, *Industrializing America*, 22-26, 36.

FIGURE 10



1807 Plat of John Hooe Washington's Union Estate,
Demonstrating the Prominence of Tayloe's Mill in the Neighborhood
Tayloe Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society

Neck.⁶⁰ Indeed, while Tayloe frequently ground his own corn and wheat at the new mill, his neighbors accounted for 50% of the mill's business and output. Wealthy and middling families alike patronized Tayloe's mill. The Carters, Fauntleroy's, and Belfields were as frequent customers as small-farm or tenant families such as the Garlands, Lawsons, Sissons, and Giburnes. Altogether, Tayloe's neighbors brought their grains for grinding on 463 occasions throughout 1810. Many customers patronized the mill on a weekly basis. For example, Captain John Belfield and Vincent Shackelford were two of Tayloe's most frequent customers, using the mill 46 and 41 times, respectively, in 1810 alone. Peter Northern and Tayloe's manager Griffin Garland brought their grains to the mill thirty times each. Others visited less frequently, such as Captain Kelsick, Robert Wormeley Carter, and John Sisson, who appear in the records eleven, sixteen, and twelve times, respectively. Some customers brought only enough wheat or corn to make one bushel, while others ground upwards of a dozen at one time.

Tayloe's slave millers ground over 350 bushels of corn and 30 bushels of wheat each week on average, making for annual production totals of well over 4,000 bushels of corn each year and an additional 360 bushels of wheat. At these rates, the mill was rarely idle, and instead ground a steady supply of wheat and corn every day, except for Sunday, from January 1 to December 29, with January to May constituting the busiest part of the year. The tolls Tayloe received from his neighbors were therefore substantial. In 1810 alone, Tayloe charged over 500 bushels of corn and about 50 bushels of wheat for the privilege of using his mill; in 1811, he made "620 Bushels Corn, 37 Bushels Wheat Toll."

⁶⁰This discussion of Tayloe's mill activities comes from the John Tayloe Account Book, Tayloe Family Papers, Mss1T2118G11, VHS.

In 1811, Tayloe also received tolls at his Menokin Mill amounting to 382.5 bushels of corn and six bushels of wheat. At both mills in 1812, he netted 850 bushels of corn and 41 of wheat.⁶¹ These tolls resulted in hundreds and even thousands of dollars of annual income for Tayloe.

John Tayloe III pursued a number of other important plantation industries besides milling. Textiling, shoemaking, blacksmithing, and shipping were other industries Tayloe operated within the Mt. Airy Department. Generally, slaves ran and staffed all of these industries. Textile making had long been a family business. John Tayloe II had established a "Manufactory of Cotton, Wool & Flax" cloth during the late 1760s. This operation included a fulling mill on the Landsdown tract staffed by a cadre of slave spinners and weavers. As of 1801, the "Old Fulling Mill" still stood and the younger John continued employing his slaves in cotton and wool clothmaking. Slave women most often held the occupations related to textiling. In 1808, Tayloe employed slaves Israel and Jane as weavers and Barnaby (replaced by Sam in 1809) and Cato as ginners. He further employed another ten slaves as spinners. The following year, Tayloe increased his pool of spinners to thirteen.⁶² Other women joined and left this group, which stabilized at about fourteen members. Altogether, eighteen slaves daily labored in Tayloe's textile operation.

Tayloe cultivated hundreds of pounds of wool and cotton each year, which provided the raw materials for the spinners' work. Spinners turned unprocessed cotton and wool fibers into thread or yarn, which weavers then made into cloth. Ginners Sam

⁶¹Mill Operations, 1810-1812, Tayloe Family Papers, Mss1T2118G11, VHS.

⁶²Mt. Airy Inventory, 1808.

and Cato assisted with the processing of cotton using the “Cotton Machine” Tayloe purchased for £15 in 1805.⁶³ This machine, likely a cotton gin, separated the usable fibers from the seeds in a manner which greatly accelerated the pace at which slaves could clean the cotton. There was enough clothmaking work to employ this small force of slaves for almost the entire year. A section of a badly deteriorated account book remains to provide a glimpse into the working lives of this group.⁶⁴ Each spinner produced on average a little over one pound of cotton thread each week during 1805. However, experienced spinners such as Else, Judy, and Izzard regularly made one pound eight ounces in a week. Less frequently, the spinners worked with wool, producing on average four and one-half pounds a week of wool yarn “for petticoats” or other winter clothing. When not spinning, the spinners assisted the ginner in “picking out the cotton,” helped make cloth, or mended other slaves’ stockings or clothing. The weavers collectively averaged about eleven and one-half pounds of cotton cloth every week. The records for the weavers’ wool work are less complete, although they indicate that during the winter, the weavers produced on average between fifteen and twenty pounds of wool cloth weekly. Much of what the spinners and weavers manufactured went to clothe the hundreds of Tayloe slaves. However, Tayloe also sold at least some clothing to his neighbors or on the local market. In 1827, he instructed his manager Benjamin

⁶³John Tayloe III Account Book, 1805-1812, TFP, 1: 185.

⁶⁴Spinning and Weaving Accounts, John Tayloe III Account Book, 1805-1806, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118G7.

Boughton, “push the spinning & weaving . . . you must try to make enough to pay my every [debt listed] below, for I have not a cent at command.”⁶⁵

In a related industry, Tayloe also employed his slaves in making shoes. Joe, Ruffin, Joe Big, and Joe spent their working lives producing custom-made shoes for Tayloe and neighborhood customers as well as work shoes for the slave community.⁶⁶ It is likely that the duplication among the shoemakers’ names was not coincidental. The eldest Joe was 41 years of age, while Joe Big was 22, and the youngest Joe was just 10 years old--the trio likely were related. A similar pattern occurred in other Mt. Airy crafts as well.⁶⁷ The repetition of male names among the skilled slaves in the Mt. Airy Department, and at the Tayloe ironworks as well, probably indicates some degree of kinship ties. Such name identity may have been even more important on a plantation like Mt. Airy, where skilled slaves received more autonomy, better provisions, and more interesting and creative work than non-skilled slaves. Passing on the name of a skilled slave father likely demonstrates not only slaves’ recognition of the importance of fatherhood in general, but also esteem for particular highly skilled fathers, and perhaps an attempt to pass on a higher status within the plantation community to slave children.⁶⁸

⁶⁵John Tayloe III to Benjamin Boughton, no date [April 18, 1827?], TFP, 5: 257-258.

⁶⁶Mt. Airy Inventory, 1808.

⁶⁷Carpenters John (age 60) and John (38), Mt. Airy Inventory 1808; Cooks Billy (53) and Billy (19), Mt. Airy Inventory 1809; Blacksmiths James (61) and L[ittle] James (9), Mt. Airy Inventory, 1811; Joiners James (28) and Little Jimmy (13), Mt. Airy Inventory, 1813; Stablemen/grooms Harry (36) and Henry (14), Mt. Airy Inventory, 1815; Miller O[ld] Tom (57, deceased) and Tom (13), Mt. Airy Inventory, 1815.

⁶⁸Richard Dunn also noted that parents’ craft skills brought them and their children certain privileges. Richard S. Dunn, “Two Slave Women: Sarah Affir of Jamaica and Winney Grimshaw of Virginia,” in Lois Green Carr: The Chesapeake and Beyond--A Celebration (Crownsville, Md., 1992), 47.

The Mt. Airy shoemakers regularly made, repaired, and sold a variety of shoes. In one week in February of 1806, the shoemakers made four pairs each of women's and men's shoes and three pairs of boots, and mended two other pairs of shoes. During one week in September of 1813, the shoemakers mended two sets of shoes and crafted five pairs of men's shoes, three pairs of women's shoes, and six pairs of boots. All of these shoes were custom orders placed by Tayloe's overseers, neighbors, and friends.

Overseers Cornelius Beazley and Reuben Beale each patronized the Mt. Airy shoemakers' shop, as did manager Benjamin Boughton, who purchased two pairs of boots in September of 1813 for \$4.00. Neighboring families also purchased their shoes from Tayloe's shop. Thomas Beale owed £0.3.6 for one pair of men's shoes in 1806, while gentlemen Landon Carter and Dr. Horace Wellford ordered several pairs of shoes in 1813. The cost of shoes and boots depended on style, workmanship, and size, and therefore it is difficult to determine an average price per pair of shoes.⁶⁹ By the mid-1810s, the Mt. Airy shoemakers' work had apparently become so highly regarded within the surrounding community that business boomed. During the week of March 24, 1816, the shoemakers manufactured and mended a combined total of ten pairs of shoes. During the summer of 1816, the craftsmen worked on an average of more than a dozen shoe pairs each week. In October of that same year, the shoemakers made fourteen pairs of shoes and five pairs of boots, not including repair work. Between June of 1816 and November of 1817 alone, the shoemaking business brought Tayloe over \$150.00.⁷⁰ Altogether, the

⁶⁹John Tayloe III Account Book, 1805-1806, TFP, I: 203; John Tayloe III Account Book, 1810-1814, TFP: I, 343.

⁷⁰John Tayloe III Account Book, 1816-1817, 1830, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T118G20.

volume of custom work combined with the manufacturing of shoes for Tayloe's large slave workforce meant that the Mt. Airy shoemakers found year-round employment plying their trade.

The Mt. Airy blacksmiths were in even greater demand. John Tayloe III continued to operate Mt. Airy's blacksmith shop in the same manner as his father had. As in the pre-Revolutionary era, Mt. Airy served as a community center for blacksmithing, and the slave smiths were renowned for their skills and talent. In 1808, five men worked as blacksmiths at Mt. Airy: James, Tom, Lewis, Jerry, and Gerrard.⁷¹ Blacksmiths also lived and worked at the Tayloe iron plantations. The Mt. Airy blacksmiths regularly performed tasks for the Tayloe plantations as well as for paying customers from the neighborhood. For example, in 1812, five of the Tayloe plantations used over \$225.00 in blacksmithing services, while paying customers accounted for an additional \$155.90 worth of business; altogether, the Mt. Airy blacksmiths performed 175 projects in that year. Projects ranged from ordinary tasks such as making and fitting horseshoes and mending tools, to more complex jobs such as repairing sawmills and making and mending carts and wagons.⁷² Tayloe's immediate neighbors were his most frequent customers. John Belfield, whose lands bordered Tayloe's across Rappahannock Creek, patronized the Mt. Airy blacksmith shop at least three dozen times between 1795 and 1801.⁷³

⁷¹Mt. Airy Inventory, 1808.

⁷²John Tayloe III Account Book, 1810-1814, TFP, 1: 225-235.

⁷³John Belfield Account, Miscellaneous Accounts, 1755-1882, TFP, 55: 685-686.

Slave sailors, ship's carpenters, and captains operated yet another important industry--an extensive shipping business that facilitated communication between the reaches of Tayloe's widespread estate as well as the marketing of Tayloe's agricultural produce and iron to coastwise ports. Tayloe owned at least three sloops (*Experiment*, *Samuel & Hartwell*, *Reubin*), four schooners (*Levant*, *Virago*, *Federalist*, *Saragossa*), and one brig (*Olympic*). Sloops and schooners were small, quick ships used for shipping in the coastwise trade. Tayloe regularly marketed his goods to nearby ports such as Alexandria, Baltimore, Norfolk, and Port Tobacco. Brigs were larger vessels more suited for Tayloe's occasional trade to the West Indies.⁷⁴ Tayloe employed at least ten and almost certainly more slaves to sail his fleet of ships. Jesse, Bill, Sam, and Peter worked as sailors out of Mt. Airy in 1825, while Moses, Dick, and Rolly were Neabsco's slave sailors. At least two slave captains, Michael and Andrew, also lived and worked at Neabsco, while ship captain Nat lived at Oaken Brow.⁷⁵ On occasion, Tayloe also used white ship's captains, as when he hired Captain Richard Batten of Westmoreland County to captain the *Virago* in 1810. For his services, Batten received one-quarter of all trade profits as well as a \$20 per month salary when the ship was used for non-commercial purposes.⁷⁶

Tayloe also built ships, an industry begun under the management of the first John Tayloe. Shipbuilding remained as one of the last vestiges of industrial activity still

⁷⁴Daybook, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C4, 1-108; Letterbook, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118G25; John Tayloe III Account Book, 1808-1811, TFP, 3: 596, 600, 632.

⁷⁵Mt. Airy Inventory, 1825; Neabsco Inventory, 1825; "Division of Tradesmen," William Henry Tayloe Account Book, 1828-1841, TFP, 1: 92; Oaken Brow Inventory, 1829.

⁷⁶Articles of Agreement, August 1810, TFP, 5: 743-745.

operative at the old Occoquan Ironworks. In 1801, Tayloe offered a newly built brig to some of his merchant associates in Baltimore. "I have a remarkably fine Hull of a Brig for Sale--just launched in Occoquan of 160 Tons--& built of the very best materials." Tayloe set his asking price at \$4,000. Tayloe's engagement with shipbuilding was advantageous--it provided him with a ready source of transportation as well as an extra source of income. In June of 1801, a Fredericksburg merchant who had agreed to purchase 100 hogsheads of Tayloe's tobacco was unable to secure a ship to transport the tobacco between Tayloe's plantation and the Norfolk market. William Holburne later relayed to the merchant that the deal was off, as Tayloe expected to "save some expence in conveying the greater proportion of his Tob[acc]o thither in his own Craft."⁷⁷

Shipping also held its advantages for the slaves, particularly in the mobility and autonomy it provided them. Slave sailors and captains spent the greatest amount of their time sailing to destinations as distant as Norfolk and Baltimore. Once in port, it is imaginable that Tayloe's slaves mingled with the urban slave communities that staffed the cities' docks and made friends and associates in petty trade in each of the ports they frequented. Indeed, all of Tayloe's skilled slaves experienced a high level of mobility and autonomy. For example, in 1817, Tayloe worried, "The Carpenters and Masons have I hope before this left the City [house in Washington to return to Mt. Airy]--having first finished every thing there." In 1824, the Mt. Airy blacksmiths spent several months in Washington City "In Col. Tayloe's Employ."⁷⁸ Probably among the most well-traveled

⁷⁷William Holburne for John Tayloe III, Mt. Airy, to Benjamin Day, Esqr., Fredericksburg, June 8, 1801, June 26, 1801, John Tayloe III Letterbook, May-July 1801, TFP, 5: 203, 218.

⁷⁸John Tayloe, Saratoga, to Nancy Tayloe, Washington City, August 12, 1817, Tayloe Family Papers, University of Virginia, 38-630, Box 1, Folder 4, emphasis original; Mt. Airy Inventory, 1824. Thomas

were over a dozen of Tayloe's domestic servants, who made the journey back and forth between Mt. Airy and Washington City every spring and fall with the Tayloe family.⁷⁹ Indeed, Tayloe's craftsmen and women probably traveled as much within the region as the Tayloes themselves did and were probably even more well-traveled than most ordinary whites.

Tayloe employed slave laborers in still other industries and businesses. He exploited several fishing holes at his plantations that bordered the region's major waterways. The two most notable fishing holes existed at Deep Hole Plantation in Prince William County and at Oaken Brow Plantation in King George County. The Occoquan Bay and the Rappahannock River, respectively, provided the basis of Tayloe's fishing enterprises at these plantations. John Tayloe II had purchased Deep Hole in 1768 to complete his Neabsco and Occoquan Ironworks holdings, while John Tayloe III had purchased Oaken Brow in 1805.⁸⁰ Surviving records do not indicate when the Tayloes turned these fishing holes into commercial operations. However, at least by the mid-1810s, John Tayloe III regularly marketed fish from the two fishing holes and also charged access or rental fees for neighboring individuals to fish on his properties.⁸¹ For these earlier years, no records indicating the volume of the fishing business survive.

Jefferson's skilled slaves experienced a similar degree of independence. See Lucia Stanton, Slavery at Monticello (Richmond, 1993), 27, 30.

⁷⁹For an idea of the slaves who regularly traveled, see the 1817 Certificate of a Slave, District of Columbia Land Court Records, Liber AP, Vol. 40, Document 104. See also, Mt. Airy Inventories, 1808-1828.

⁸⁰TFP, 5: 135, 136; King George County Deed Book 9: 131.

⁸¹John Tayloe Account Book, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, MssIT2118C6.

FIGURE 11



A Map of Colo. John Tayloe's Deep Hole Estate
Virginia Historical Society

By the 1820s, however, Tayloe was selling over \$1,000 worth of fish annually from his two fisheries. In 1827, Tayloe took in \$1,132.77 at the Deep Hole Fishery, while in 1828, the Oaken Brow Fishery sold \$825.42 worth of fish. One Mr. Phillips alone ran up an account of \$385.10 in fish by August of 1828. In 1829, Oaken Brow sold another \$611.14 worth of fish, while sales in 1837 at Deep Hole declined to \$333.11.⁸² Tayloe even supplied Occoquan tavernkeeper Michael Cleary with “500 pickled Shad for use in his tavern from the Deep Hole fishery” in return for free accommodations at the inn and stables while Tayloe served as the operator of a stageline through the town.⁸³ Tayloe’s fisheries produced mainly herring and shad, which he caught as they swam upriver in the spring to spawn and then sold to local markets and neighboring planters. The volume of fish caught each year was large. For example, in 1826, Oaken Brow overseer William Greenlaw recorded having sold 38,800 herring and 799 shad, in addition to the 44,000 herring with which he supplied the various plantations that year. In 1827, the volume remained as impressive, with Greenlaw selling 24,800 salted herring and 775 salted shad in addition to the 31,400 herring sent to the Tayloe plantations. Even individuals purchased large numbers of fish from the fisheries. Thomas Nelson and Arrington Evans each bought 100 shad from Tayloe’s fisheries in 1827, while John Bland purchased 200 shad and William Sheman bought 600.⁸⁴

⁸²John Tayloe III Account with William Greenlaw, Overseer, King George County Plantation Records, TFP, 27: 631, 648, 709; John Tayloe III Account Books, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C10-20, *passim*; Benjamin Ogle Tayloe Account Book, John Tayloe III Estate, 1828-1855, TFP, 7: 31.

⁸³Articles of Agreement, March 25, 1826, between Michael Cleary of Occoquan and John Tayloe III, TFP, 5: 759.

⁸⁴John Tayloe III Account with William Greenlaw, Overseer, King George County Plantation Records, TFP, 27: 619-621; John Tayloe III Account Book, 1827, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C19 or 20.

As with Tayloe's other industries, African-American slaves performed the labor at the Deep Hole and Oaken Brow fisheries. Thirty-four slave adults and 29 slave children resided at Deep Hole in 1825, while 26 adults and 21 children lived at Oaken Brow in 1829.⁸⁵ Both plantations also included large agricultural quarters; thus not all of these slaves engaged in the fishing industry. In fact, herring and shad made their upstream journey only in the spring, which likely means that the Deep Hole and Oaken Brown slaves labored in this industry only during the spring and early summer. However, during the height of the fishing season, Tayloe pressured his slaves to catch as many fish as possible because the fisheries served as important money-makers for him. In 1827, Tayloe ordered his manager Benjamin Boughton to "please [instruct the overseer to] push the fishing above [at Deep Hole]--[to] make all he can--from economy care & dispatch--[and] make all hands do their duty--Black and White."⁸⁶

John Tayloe III utilized his slaves' labor in yet another enterprise, one in which he had had an interest since his childhood and from which he took great pleasure--horse breeding and racing. When Tayloe was just a little over two years old, his father expressed an amused concern that the boy was already "fond now of horses to distraction." The elder Tayloe admitted his penchant for matters of the turf as well, saying he could not "help wishing for a good nag to take some of the Jockey club plates at Annapolis or Fredericksburg."⁸⁷ While John Tayloe II had been a well-known and well-respected breeder and racer in his own right, John Tayloe III became internationally

⁸⁵Deep Hole Inventory, 1825; Oaken Brow Inventory, 1829.

⁸⁶John Tayloe III to Benjamin Boughton, no date [April 18, 1827], TFP, 5: 257-258.

⁸⁷John Tayloe, Mount Airy, to George William Fairfax, December 14, 1773, TFP, 5: 116-117.

known for the quality of his stables and interest in the business of sport. Upon his return from England, the younger Tayloe immediately entered the Chesapeake racing scene. His horses repeatedly won the prizes at tracks in Maryland, Virginia, and the new city of Washington. Belle Air alone won over £400 in Tayloe's first year of racing, and brought Tayloe another £1000 when he sold the horse to one William Archie in 1795.⁸⁸ Nantoaki won nine out of ten races, netting an unrecorded amount of prize money before being sold for £112 in 1794. Leviathan ran in 16 races between 1798 and 1802, and then Tayloe sold him for £180. Castianira brought Tayloe over £800 from her combined racing and breeding activities between 1800 and 1808. Tayloe won £976 from eight races his horses won during 1805.⁸⁹ Between 1791 and 1806, Tayloe entered dozens of races which netted him, by a conservative estimate, a total of over £8500 currency.⁹⁰

Tayloe's reputation and interest in horse racing was so great that he served as president of the Tappahannock Jockey Club between at least 1796 and 1801 and also founded and officiated over the Washington Jockey Club by 1798.⁹¹ Tayloe built a Washington racetrack just four blocks from the President's mansion and only six blocks from the lot he purchased for his own yet-to-be-constructed house. Indeed, Wilhelmus Bryan, a twentieth-century historian of early Washington, attributed the popularity of

⁸⁸John Tayloe III and Benjamin Ogle Tayloe Account Book, 1791-1834, [hereafter the "Race Book"], Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2418C2.

⁸⁹Race Book; John Tayloe Horse Account Book, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C2.

⁹⁰John Tayloe Horse Account Book.

⁹¹Tappahannock Jockey Club Record Book, 1796-1801, TFP, 7: 277-296; Tappahannock Jockey Club Accounts, 1797-1800, TFP, 7: 297-300; Orlando V. Ridout, Building the Octagon (Washington, DC, 1989), 23.

horseracing in the new federal city “to the interest taken in the breeding of racing stock by John Tayloe, reputed to be the wealthiest man in the city.”⁹²

Tayloe owned almost 100 horses over time.⁹³ A few were used solely for agricultural or work purposes, but most served as race horses and then as studs or breeding mares after their prime racing years had passed. Breeding was likely as profitable as racing, or even more so, although the records are less complete for the former. Some horses were raised with the sole purpose of being sold for a profit, while others were used for racing or breeding first and then sold once they established valuable reputations. Tayloe noted that Grey Diomed covered “57 strange Mares” in 1797, netting \$912. Kill Devil spent two seasons in stud at Nanjemoy because the demand in the surrounding Maryland community was so great. William Holburne instructed Tayloe’s Nanjemoy overseer, “[Y]ou will have all the Nanjemoy mares covered by him, & as many others as you can in the neighborhood--at such a Price as you may deem it most advisable to stand him at--to make the best of the Season.” Holburne enclosed Kill Devil’s pedigree with his instructions for the customers’ perusal.⁹⁴ Tayloe’s reputation carried as far as Tarbrough, Alabama, where planter Henry Cotton contracted to rent the horse Chance for five years in return for “the half part of his earnings [from racing and

⁹²Wilhelmus B. Bryan, A History of the National Capital from its Foundation through the Period of the Adoption of the Organic Act (New York, 1914-1916), 1: 304, 609.

⁹³For lists of Tayloe’s horses, see John Tayloe Horse Account Book; “List of the Stud formerly owned by Colo. John Tayloe [from] American Farmer vol. 6 page 50,” TFP, 14: 530-532; Race Book.

⁹⁴John Tayloe Horse Account Book; Race Book; William Holburne for John Tayloe III, Mount Airy, to Mr. Hewlett, Nanjemoy, by Israel, May 26, 1801, John Tayloe III Letterbook, May-July 1801.

FIGURE 12



Mt. Airy Stable, circa 1840
Southern Historical Collection

covering] to be paid to [Tayloe] as soon after each season as you can possibly remit it.”

In Tayloe’s opinion, Chance was “the best bred horse in America.”⁹⁵

Tayloe sometimes imported horses with particularly notable pedigrees from England as a means of attracting further business. He negotiated a partnership with a Mr. Reeves and John Weatherby of London, who were probably merchants, to find and send him several “very preferable horse[s]” to offer for breeding purposes. He carefully analyzed the pros and cons of each of the “Capitol” or best-known horses they were considering, and urged immediate shipment of their selection. Tayloe also urged caution in their spending, noting that “tho’ ultimately our profits may be large, yet the time will be long before we can get in our money.”⁹⁶ Tayloe excitedly anticipated that “the sooner [the horses] come, the better to be prepared to shew in Winter, and be ready for the Spring Campaign.”⁹⁷ Tayloe also contacted Charles Wingman, a Baltimore associate preparing to travel to England, to ask him to “tell me of the Hunts Raceing &c--& the prices of Horse of various descriptions . . . & whether one would be bought that w[oul]d here turn out to a great speculation.”⁹⁸

While Tayloe obviously derived great pleasure from his large and reputable stables, he just as surely recognized the business opportunities and profit potential present in horse breeding and racing. Thus, like any of the other enterprises he undertook, Tayloe

⁹⁵John Tayloe, Washington, to Henry Cotton, near Tarbrough, Alabama, July 7, 1819, emphasis original, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C1.

⁹⁶John Tayloe, Mount Airy, to Mr. Reeves, London, June 1, 1801, John Tayloe III Letterbook, May-July 1801.

⁹⁷John Tayloe to J. Weatherby, London, June 1, 1801, John Tayloe III Letterbook, May-July 1801.

⁹⁸John Tayloe, Mount Airy, to Charles Wingman, by the Careof Messrs. Hodgson & Thompson, Baltimore, June 7, 1801, emphasis original, John Tayloe III Letterbook, May-July 1801.

required the assistance of skilled and semi-skilled laborers to care for, train, groom, and race the horses. It appears that Tayloe employed at least one experienced white groom. In 1801, he inquired of his London contacts whether they knew of a “middle aged . . . sober, attentive, active, and industrious training Groom who has been accustomed to it all his life, and is in every point of view unexceptionable as to character and knowledge of horses” who would be willing to immigrate to Virginia. Tayloe was anxious to hire such a person, as his previous groom “lately behaved much amiss.” Tayloe offered to pay the right person 50 guineas a year, room and board, and travel expenses.⁹⁹ Slaves also played an important role in Tayloe’s equine pursuits. Three men at Mt. Airy, Sam, Mark, and Peter, served as grooms in 1809, while slave Adam was one of Tayloe’s prized jockies. Harry, Henry, and Gawen tended to the stables and also worked as coachmen.¹⁰⁰ Although the records are otherwise silent, Tayloe undoubtedly employed other personnel in handling this aspect of his estate as well.

Skilled slaves held crucial skilled positions in most of Tayloe’s businesses and industries. For slaves who possessed prized craft and industrial skills, their indispensability proved to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, skilled slaves determined much of their own time and work, traveled alone or with other skilled slaves to perform tasks at other plantations, received exciting opportunities to travel to new places and meet new people, and likely took great pride and satisfaction in their work, reputation, and status. Craft and industrial skills were personally rewarding. On the other hand, skilled slaves’ specialized work, workday segregation from the mass of the Mt.

⁹⁹John Tayloe to J. Weatherby, London, June 1, 1801.

¹⁰⁰Mt. Airy Inventories, 1809, 1815.

Airy Department slaves who labored as fieldhands, frequent absences due to travel, and the likelihood of relocation to other plantations for weeks and months at a time with little say in the matter likely disrupted family and community relationships. That skilled slaves formed families and bore children is supported in the Mt. Airy inventories. However, the impact on families of skilled slaves must have been considerable.

While it is difficult to extract details about the challenges that skilled slaves' jobs created for the overall slave community, it is easier to analyze the impact of Tayloe's plantation management on the slave population. Because Tayloe treated his numerous plantations as parts of a larger whole, he frequently moved slaves between plantations--some temporarily and others permanently--and regularly drew from his existing plantations to staff new ones he purchased. For example, in 1809, five of the 17 slaves at Menokin Plantation were inventoried with the initials "OH" or "DH" by their names, indicating that their home plantation was either Old House or Doctors Hall. In 1815, 47-year-old Barnaby, a Mask resident, was "sent to Drs Hall." Similarly, in 1816, Gwinfield's Joe was sent to Old House. The 1817 Mt. Airy inventory included Fork Eve, Old House Fanny, Fork Peggy, and Windsor Joice.¹⁰¹ These examples represent the high volume of slave movement Tayloe orchestrated between plantations.

Tayloe's purchases of new plantations created even more distress for the Mt. Airy Department slave communities. In 1810 Tayloe purchased a set of ironworks in western Botetourt County. That same year he sent at least 25 slaves from Gwinfield, Old House, and Doctors Hall to the Cloverdale and Brunswick Ironworks. At least seven more slaves

¹⁰¹ 1809 Menokin Inventory, TFP, 6: 320; 1815 Mask Inventory, TFP, 6: 352; 1816 Gwinfield Inventory, TFP, 6: 356; 1817 Mt. Airy Inventory, TFP, 6: 361.

headed west at their master's behest in the following couple of years. Similarly, Tayloe purchased Windsor Plantation in King George County in 1819, and within a year proceeded to move slaves from around his estate to the new lands. As of 1820, two of the Windsor slaves came from Oakenbrow, one from Doctors Hall, three from Wellington, three from Old House, three from the Fork, and three from Neabsco.¹⁰² A worse fate remained—when Tayloe's sons developed an interest in cotton planting in the deep South during the 1820s, they began sending some of the Mt. Airy slaves to Alabama. Before Tayloe's death in 1828, at least six slaves were separated from the rest of the community in this way; many others would follow during the 1830s.¹⁰³

Tayloe's practice of moving slaves around the plantations as needed frequently separated parents from children. Elsy's eight-year-old daughter Nancy, from Mask, and Mary's seven-year-old son, James, from Doctors Hall, both resided at Mt. Airy in 1808 and 1809. In 1812, Mask's Kesiah was sent to the Hopyard while her two children remained behind at Mask. In 1815, Tayloe sent Franky, age 14, and Barnaby, age 11, from Mask to Doctors Hall and Old House. In 1819, Tayloe sent young weavers Eliza and Fanny (12 and 14) "out with [the] carp[ente]rs" for a short-term project. He also employed Nancy's seven-year-old son Billy as the "Cook boy at the City," and sent Agga's daughter Georgiana, age ten, to Doctors Hall.¹⁰⁴ Even more disastrous for slave families was that, of at least 33 Mt. Airy slaves whom Tayloe sold between 1815

¹⁰²1820 Windsor Inventory, TFP, 27: 661; King George County Deed Book 11: 14.

¹⁰³1825 Mt. Airy and Old House inventories, TFP, 27: 858.

¹⁰⁴1808 and 1809 Mt. Airy Inventories, TFP, 6: 313, 321; 1812 Mask Inventory, TFP, 6: 337; 1815 Mask Inventory, TFP, 6: 352; 1819 Mt. Airy Inventory, TFP, 6: 371.

and 1825, 21 of them were under 16.¹⁰⁵ Thus, while Tayloe felt an “aversion to separate familys of slaves,” he certainly did not let his conscience interfere with good business.¹⁰⁶

Milling, textiling, shoemaking, blacksmithing, fishing, and horsebreeding were all plantation industries that netted Tayloe significant annual income in addition to the profits he made from his formidable agricultural production. Through these industries, Tayloe found the means to diversify his business holdings and interests, protect himself against fluctuations in any one sector of the economy, profitably employ his hundreds of slaves, and produce capital resources for further investment and speculation. These industries helped Tayloe make his estate as productive and efficient as possible. Another activity, the leasing of unused or underused lands, furthered these goals. Land leasing provided opportunities for Tayloe to make money from lands he could not utilize profitably, often with the advantages of keeping access to resources such as timber and requiring tenants to pay any applicable taxes on the land they rented. Land leasing also supplied Tayloe with a large number of tenants who might occasionally be willing to take on additional work, assist in the harvest, or serve as overseers. At any one time after 1800, Tayloe likely rented to about three dozen or more tenant families across his Virginia and Maryland estate.

For example, Tayloe leased his Fredericksburg townhouse and lot to David Blair for 21 years at an annual rent of £90 on the condition that Blair maintain the house and make appropriate and specified repairs.¹⁰⁷ Tayloe leased various Mt. Airy Department

¹⁰⁵John Tayloe III Inventory Book; 1825 Mt. Airy Inventory, TFP, 27: 858.

¹⁰⁶John Tayloe III Will.

¹⁰⁷Fredericksburg Deed Book C: 50.

lands to as many as thirty different tenants, if not more, between 1800 and 1828. The amounts of land involved and the rental terms varied. One tenant rented 216 acres in King George County for the duration of his life for an annual rent of 1500 pounds of tobacco and cask.¹⁰⁸ Two others rented small sections of Menokin for 700 pounds of tobacco and an addition £2.10 currency each annually.¹⁰⁹ Will Stanley paid Tayloe £100 in rent for each year of his five-year lease of a ropewalk (rope factory) and cabin at Richmond Courthouse, while Hezekiah Gray's rent of an old unused agricultural quarter stood at \$40 per year in 1819.¹¹⁰ These contracts are representative of the many others Tayloe negotiated with various tenants. Altogether, Tayloe's entrepreneurialism in leasing otherwise unoccupied and unprofitable lands brought him at least £500 and 5000 pounds of tobacco annually in the years before 1810 and over \$1,500 annually afterwards. These totals do not include rents Tayloe charged on his numerous city lots.

Tayloe dabbled in some other money-making pursuits as well. In 1792, he acquired 200 slaves whom he offered for sale at Fredericksburg "on twelve months credit."¹¹¹ Tayloe also sold such of his own individual slaves who proved truculent, poor workers, or in any other way not profitable. Ann Kedgelie of Washington purchased Tayloe's mulatto boy Matt in 1810 for \$450.00. Tayloe sold 26 slaves at Washington's

¹⁰⁸King George County Deed Book 8: 425.

¹⁰⁹John Tayloe Account Book, 1805-1812; Richmond County Deed Book 17: 416. William Shackleford rented 496.5 acres bordering Mt. Airy for £25 per year, while James Reynolds paid £5 annually for a small tract and Henry Sisson paid 1000 pounds of tobacco on a yearly basis for a larger one. Richmond County Deed Book 18: 66; John Tayloe Account Book, 1805-1812.

¹¹⁰Minute Book, 1813-1818; H. Gray Lease, November 23, 1819, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C27.

¹¹¹Maryland Gazette, October 11, 1792.

notorious slave auctions in September of 1816 for almost \$10,000.¹¹² In 1825, Tayloe sold nineteen-year-old Garland to Clement Clay of Huntsville, Alabama, for \$600.¹¹³ Furthermore, as Tayloe sought greater efficiency and productivity around his estate, he slowly sold excess women, who were more likely to be unskilled and thus less valuable than male slaves.¹¹⁴ Slave sales, from Tayloe's perspective, served both to trim nonproductive workers from his estate and to provide needed ready money for the purpose of reinvestment.

While one historian of the Tayloe family has characterized John Tayloe III as the quintessential genteel, unacquisitive Virginia planter,¹¹⁵ Tayloe in fact was the consummate entrepreneur. He made adjustments as the economy and market dictated, he sold or rearranged lands and slaves to maintain their profitability, and he invested in and operated agricultural and industrial enterprises informed by the new ideas and opportunities that emerged with the new nation—earning him a widespread reputation as the wealthiest man in Virginia and Washington City during the early nineteenth

¹¹²John Tayloe to Ann Kedgelie, April 16, 1810, District of Columbia Land Court Records, 1810 Bill of Sale, Liber Y, Vol. 24, Document 102; "Sale of Slaves Made by DC on a/c of Colo. John Tayloe to J. Bevan," TFP, 6: 115-116.

¹¹³Bill of Sale for a Slave to Clement Clay from John Tayloe and Jesse Mundy, October 8, 1825, Clement Clairborne Clay Papers, Duke University.

¹¹⁴Dunn, "A Tale of Two Plantations," *passim*.

¹¹⁵Richard Dunn, long-time investigator of the Tayloe family slaves in the nineteenth century, characterized John Tayloe III as follows: "Tayloe was no profit-maximizing entrepreneur. His well-worn fields produced modest yields, his work force was far larger than necessary, and the rhythm of the place evoked leisured gentility rather than business efficiency." Dunn, "A Tale of Two Plantations," 64. Dunn based this characterization on an analysis of Mt. Airy during the nineteen years between 1809 and 1828. However, by 1817 Tayloe no longer resided at Mt. Airy and had begun turning over managerial responsibility to his sons.

century.¹¹⁶ Tayloe's annual income from his various rural agricultural and industrial activities (not including his ironworks) ranged between \$20,000 and \$30,000, and his Virginia estate alone was valued at almost £100,000, or over \$300,000.¹¹⁷ His ironworks and various city investments and businesses proved even more lucrative and more than doubled his annual income. John Tayloe III at once represented the culmination of his father's and grandfather's legacy as entrepreneurial planter-businessmen and a departure into new business and investment arenas—the financial, transportation, and internal improvement companies characteristic of the South's burgeoning urban areas. These aspects of Tayloe's business portfolio, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, provide further evidence of Tayloe's adaptability and entrepreneurialism and foreshadow an emerging trend in nineteenth-century upper-class identity—the movement towards business specialization.

¹¹⁶The prevailing rumor during his own lifetime was that Tayloe earned an income of at least \$75,000 a year from his combined rural and agricultural activities. While his annual income was unquestionably impressive, the exact figure can no longer be calculated due to incomplete records and unsettled accounts. See George McCue, "The Octagon, Town House That Preceded the Town," *Historic Preservation* (April-June 1974), 28; Roberta Love Tayloe, *Return to Powhatan: Growing Up in Old Virginia* (n.p., 1985), 20.

¹¹⁷See, for example, 1809 Mt. Airy Inventory, TFP, 6: 316.

CHAPTER V

ENGAGED IN THE BUSINESS OF THE NEW NATION

During the post-revolutionary era, the political economy of Virginia and the new nation steadily changed. Virginia planters concentrated even more of their acreage in grains and moved away from their previous dependence on tobacco, creating new demands for services, central processing centers, and access to markets and credit. Planters also continued and even expanded their investments in a variety of plantation craft and industrial shops and services. In addition, some planter-businessmen began to specialize in a variety of industrial or merchant concerns, increasingly abandoning agriculture as their main occupation. In these areas, the Revolution served to accelerate processes that had begun during the colonial era. However, the Revolution also created new situations and realities. Now solely responsible for the management and development of their communities, state and local leaders recognized the need for better infrastructure and therefore committed to the building and financing of a variety of internal improvement projects. Simultaneously, leading merchants, planter-businessmen, and other officials joined to establish banks and other financial institutions to help facilitate the growth and transition of the economy. In many instances, these phenomena merged in the formation or expansion of towns and cities, such as Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and Alexandria.¹

¹On political economy, see Drew R. McCoy, The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America (New York, 1980), 6. T. H. Breen, Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater

John Tayloe III adjusted his business investments and activities to take the fullest advantage of the newly developing political economy. On his Chesapeake plantations, he shifted from tobacco to wheat and other grains, profitably operated milling, fishing, blacksmithing, shoemaking, and other craft industries, employed increasingly large proportions of his slaves in skilled trades, and constantly purchased, sold, or leased tracts of land to maximize the profitability of his estate. Simultaneously, Tayloe began to pursue a variety of new urban and industrial investments and opportunities.

Tayloe, like his father and other planter-businessmen, had long been interested in and enamored of the politics, society, and culture of towns and cities. After returning from his schooling at Cambridge at the age of 20, Tayloe married Anne Ogle, daughter of the Maryland Governor. The couple spent half of each year between 1792 and 1800 in the former economic hub of Annapolis with Anne's parents. Tayloe soon realized that

Planters on the Eve of the Revolution (Princeton, 1985), 204-210; Jean B. Russo, "A Model Planter: Edward Lloyd IV of Maryland, 1770-1796," William and Mary Quarterly [hereafter WMQ] 3d ser., 49 (January 1992), 67; John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, The Economy of British America, 1607-1789 (Chapel Hill, 1985), 361; Joyce Chaplin, An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815 (Chapel Hill, 1993), 331; Walter Licht, Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century (Baltimore, Md., 1995), xvii, 18-19, 21, 35-38; Charles Sellers, The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846 (New York, 1991), 19-23; Robert S. Starobin, Industrial Slavery in the Old South (New York, 1970), 10 and *passim*; Gerald W. Mullin, Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia (London, 1972), 87-88, 125-126; Frederick Siegel, The Roots of Southern Distinctiveness: Tobacco and Society in Danville, Virginia, 1780-1865 (Chapel Hill, 1987), page; Thomas M. Preisser, "Alexandria and the Evolution of the Northern Virginia Economy," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography [hereafter VMHB] 89 (1981), 293; Christopher Phillips, Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860 (Urbana, Ill., 1997), 10-14; David Goldfield, "Antebellum Washington in Context: The Pursuit of Prosperity and Identity," in Howard Gillette, Jr., ed., Southern City. National Ambition: The Growth of Early Washington, D.C., 1800-1860 (Washington, DC, 1995), 2; William H. Siener, "Economic Development in Revolutionary Virginia: Fredericksburg, 1750-1810," unpublished dissertation, The College of William and Mary, 1982; John T. Schlotterbeck, "Plantation and Farm: Social and Economic Change in Orange and Greene Counties, Virginia, 1716-1860," unpublished dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1980, 1-2; Frances C. Robb, "Industry in the Potomac River Valley, 1760-1860," unpublished dissertation, West Virginia University, 1991, 11-12 and *passim*; Louis Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall: A Virginia Planter of the Eighteenth Century (Charlottesville, Va., 1965), 131, 164. For good discussions of economic transition during the post-revolutionary era in New England, see Christopher Clark, The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860 (Ithaca, N.Y., 1990), 7-10, Part II; Carol Sheriff, The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862 (New York, 1996), Chapter 1.

Annapolis made little sense for an enterprising Virginia man with business and political ambitions. He had no vested interest in Maryland politics and Annapolis's economic situation was not what it once had been. He and Anne began considering other options—perhaps Baltimore or, better yet, Philadelphia. However, a friend of Tayloe's father dissuaded the young man from making Philadelphia his new home. George Washington, founder of the new federal capital, began to press upon Tayloe the benefits and potential of Washington City. Taking a bold step, Tayloe changed his plans, and in 1797 purchased a lot near the President's Mansion at the corner of New York Avenue and 18th Street in Washington.² Convinced of the economic opportunity present in Washington City, Tayloe sold off a number of lots and townhouses he owned in the smaller town of Fredericksburg, Virginia, and invested \$28,000 in the construction of a fine city house.³ Once the Octagon was complete in 1801, Tayloe and his young family spent half of each year, from October to March, in the new federal city. During these months, Tayloe seized every opportunity to invest in the variety of internal improvement and land speculation companies, banks, stocks, real estate, service industries, and other businesses

²Gustavus Scott to John Tayloe, April 19, 1797, District of Columbia Land Court Records (hereafter DC Land), 1797 Deed, Liber B, Vol. 2, Document 1.

³Fredericksburg Deed Book B: 522, C: 428. The Octagon is now a museum located at 1799 New York Avenue, Northwest, in Washington, DC. It is operated by the American Architectural Foundation and is open to the public. The final cost of the house was a source of stress for Tayloe: "my Object is to be done with the Building as quickly as I can with the least Trouble & Vexation—for the Expense of it already alarms me to Death whenever I think of it—" John Tayloe, Mount Airy, to William Lovering, Georgetown, June 14, 1801, John Tayloe III Letterbook, May-July 1801, Tayloe Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society [hereafter VHS], Reel 5, Frames 212-213. A large part of the Tayloe Family Papers have been microfilmed as part of the Records of Ante-Bellum Southern Plantations, Series M, Part 1: The Tayloe Family. These papers will hereafter be expressed as TFP, Reel: Frame, to distinguish them from Tayloe family papers that are not part of the microfilm collections located at the VHS and other repositories. On the construction of the house, see also George McCue, The Octagon (Washington, DC, 1976) and Orlando Ridout, Building the Octagon (Washington, DC, 1989).

FIGURE 13



**Pen and ink drawing of The Octagon, Washington, DC
Drawing by John Desmond, AIA**

headquartered in the new city. Tayloe thus managed an increasingly diversified, complex, and expansive estate consisting of a variety of rural and urban enterprises.

As on his rural plantations, Tayloe required the skills and expertise of a variety of slave laborers to operate his urban household and businesses. The Tayloes' seasonal move to the city necessitated that some of their slaves make the journey as well. Most of the Tayloes' two dozen personal domestic servants resided at the Mt. Airy big house in Richmond County, Virginia, when they were not in Washington. These slaves performed the daily tasks of cooking, cleaning, chauffeuring, and providing in other personal ways for the Tayloes. In 1808, Tayloe had 11 house servants, three cooks, two dairy maids, one laundress, two coachmen, three grooms, and four gardeners.⁴ Generally, the slaves who moved seasonally with the Tayloes were among these domestic servants. On December 22, 1817, when the Tayloes finally decided to make Washington their permanent home,⁵ Tayloe certified that he had brought the following slaves into the city from Virginia for his personal use: Archy, Harry, John, Lewis, Betty, Henry, Winny, Maria, Sinah, Kitty, Godfrey, Travis, Horace, John, and Winny.⁶ These were the slaves who most frequently traveled back and forth with the Tayloes, and it was from this group that the Tayloes chose their permanent contingent of slave laborers once they relocated to the city. The Tayloes also kept several slaves, including Lucy and her 12-year-old

⁴1808 Mt. Airy Inventory, TFP, 6: 312-314.

⁵John Tayloe's oldest son turned 18 in 1811, the first year Tayloe took most of these 16 slaves listed on the certificate to Washington with him. The fourth John's reaching adulthood allowed the elder Tayloe to focus more attention on city pursuits and begin releasing plantation management responsibilities to his children. In 1818, Tayloe III turned over Mt. Airy to John Tayloe IV, retaining a 10% cut of the profits of all crops produced on the estate. When Tayloe IV died in 1824, Tayloe III instigated a similar arrangement with Benjamin Ogle and William Henry Tayloe. See TFP, 5: 610-611.

⁶1817 Certificate of a Slave, DC Land, Liber AP, Vol. 40, Document 104.

daughter Colin, in residence year-round at the Octagon to maintain the house and prepare it for their arrival.⁷

These fifteen slaves held various occupations, ranged in age from 12 to 65, and were involved in numerous family relationships that were affected by their seasonal absences.⁸ Adults and children, married and single persons, and skilled and domestic slaves all spent time in Washington away from the Mt. Airy community. Maria, Travis, and Billy were all children taken to the city at various times for different lengths of stay. Maria spent part of every year between 1808 and 1828 in the city, while Billy was sent away from his family to Washington in 1819 at the age of seven to work as the “Cook boy at [the] City.”⁹ While a teenager, Travis left his mother Mary and his brother James to work as a joiner in the city.¹⁰ In rare instances, Tayloe sent whole families to Washington to work. Harry Jackson, 32 in 1811, was Tayloe’s coachman, and he drove the family’s coach back and forth between the two estates each season. His wife Winney, 30, was one of Anne Tayloe’s most trusted domestic servants. Their son Henry, 10 in 1811, became the stable boy for the city property by 1813. While the three Jacksons

⁷1802 Certificate of a Slave, DC Land, Liber AP, Vol. 40, Document 103.

⁸Tayloe’s slave inventories, 1808-1828, were used to establish slave participation in the seasonal moving between Mt. Airy and Washington in the following manner: slaves appearing on the Mt. Airy inventories, unless otherwise noted, were assumed to have stayed at Mt. Airy during that travel season, while slaves not present on the inventories were assumed to have been removed to Washington. The inventories were annually completed in January, the middle of the Tayloe’s winter retreat.

⁹1819 Mt. Airy Inventory, TFP, 6: 371.

¹⁰Doctor’s Hall Inventories, 1808-1814, TFP, 6: 310-345; Mt. Airy Inventories, 1815-1825, TFP, 6: 347-393. Wilma King provides a compelling discussion of the effect of slavery, including separation from parents and family, on slave children, see Wilma King, Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth Century America (Bloomington, Ind., 1995), especially Chapter 5.

were fortunate to stay together, the seasonal move meant that they had to leave two other children behind, daughters Betsey and Esther.¹¹

Tayloe's seasonal moves allowed the white family to take part in an active social and political community during the months when the plantation demanded less of their energy and attention. However, this annual routine clearly caused disruptions and difficulties for the Tayloe slaves, who every six months had to either say good-byes or reacquaint themselves with the latest goings-on in the Mt. Airy quarters. While the Tayloes could take all of their thirteen children with them each season, their slaves did not have the same opportunity.¹² Furthermore only five of the domestic slaves, Archy, Harry, Winny, Maria, and John, regularly participated in the seasonal moving. Henry and Kitty joined them by 1815 as part of the regular city labor contingent.¹³ Often, however, slaves resided in the city only long enough to complete a particular assignment. On the eve of the 1817 harvest, Tayloe worried, "The Carpenters and Masons have I hope before this left the City—having first finished every thing there."¹⁴ In 1824, smiths Lewis, Jarrett, Tom, and Jim spent part of the year in the city "In Col. Tayloe's Employ."¹⁵ As a result of the irregularity of returns to the city, only a few Tayloe slaves had the opportunity to establish long-term relationships with other slaves or free blacks living in

¹¹Inventory Book, *passim*; See also, Richard Dunn, "Two Slave Women: Sarah Affir of Jamaica and Winney Grimshaw of Virginia," in Lois Green Carr: The Chesapeake and Beyond—a Celebration (Crownsville, Md., 1992), 47-48.

¹²The Tayloes had a total of fifteen children, but two, Anne and Lloyd, died in infancy.

¹³In 1826, the Tayloes paid personal property taxes of \$35.00 on "5 male and 1 female slaves," supporting the inventory evidence that by the 1820s, only a small group of the original 16 slaves listed on the 1817 Certificate regularly resided in the city, TFP, 6: 265.

¹⁴John Tayloe, Saratoga, to Nancy Tayloe, Washington City, August 12, 1817, Tayloe Family Papers, University of Virginia [hereafter UVA], 38-630, Box 1, Folder 4, emphasis original.

¹⁵Mt. Airy Inventory, TFP, 27: 850.

Washington.¹⁶ Those who did establish relationships during one year likely did not have the opportunity to return the next year to build further on those relationships.

For those slaves who regularly traveled to the city or resided there with the Tayloes permanently after 1817, Washington was a challenging environment. The city in 1800 was a grand plan that had yet to be put into action. The total population hovered around 3,000 including just over 600 slaves. Approximately 38% of Washington households included slaves in 1800, and 90% owned fewer than five slaves. Only 372 buildings stood in the entire city, including long-established Georgetown, in 1800.¹⁷ By 1810, there were still fewer than 10,000 people in the city, most of whom lived between the White House and Capitol Hill. In 1822, 2,346 total dwellings existed for a total of a little more than 13,000 inhabitants, including over 3,500 African Americans.¹⁸ Not until

¹⁶For other analyses of the early Washington slave community, see Mary Beth Corrigan, "A Social Union of Heart and Effort: The African-American Family in the District of Columbia on the Eve of Emancipation," unpublished dissertation, University of Maryland, 1996; Corrigan, "The Ties That Bind: The Pursuit of Community and Freedom Among Slaves and Free Blacks in the District of Columbia, 1800-1860," in Howard Gillette, Jr., ed., Southern City, National Ambition: The Growth of Early Washington, DC, 1800-1860 (Washington, DC, 1995), 69-90; Stephanie Cole, "Gender, Race, and Work: Domestic Service in the Urban Upper South, 1800-1850," unpublished dissertation, University of Florida, 1993; Cole, "Changes for Mrs. Thornton's Arthur: Patterns of Domestic Service in Washington, DC, 1800-1835," Social Science History 15(3) (Fall 1991), 367-379; Jean V. Berlin, "A Mistress and a Slave: Anna Maria Thornton and John Arthur Bowen," Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association (1990), 69-74; Letitia Woods Brown, Free Negroes in the District of Columbia (New York, 1972). The standard work on the topic of urban slavery is Richard C. Wade, Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860 (London, 1964).

¹⁷1800 District of Columbia Census, Roll 5, 117-150; "Washington in 1800: Location of the Habitable Buildings One Hundred Years Ago," Washington Star, March 3, 1900; Washington Directory of 1820 (Silver Springs, Md., 1987); see also, James Sterling Young, The Washington Community, 1800-1828 (New York, 1966), 66-67.

¹⁸ "The Sessford Annals," Records of the Columbia Historical Society (1911), 271-297.

the 1830s, however, did the free black population begin to exceed the slave population and achieve the necessary critical mass for community formation.¹⁹

Numerous residents, visitors, and others who felt qualified to comment derided early Washington as uncivilized, rude, and underdeveloped. Albert Gallatin, a congressman from western Pennsylvania, complained in 1801, "It is not a town, it is inconvenient, we cannot legislate as well nor as cheap as *if we were in a city*."²⁰ The main neighborhoods surrounded the Capitol, White House, Navy Yard, and Georgetown, and residents had to cross swamps, streams, and unpaved muddy ditches which were supposed to serve as roads in order to travel around the city. An estimation of the "city" by foreign traveler Charles Ingersoll was representative: "For several days after my arrival here, I did not know I was in the city of Washington, the capital of America Washington is not built compact or in streets, but . . . lies scattered over a wilderness, yet in a great measure unreclaimed from a state of nature . . . [and] detached portions [of the town] . . . are situated a few miles off."²¹ Thus, when Tayloe's slaves first attempted to join Washington's African-American communities, they encountered a variety of physical and social challenges. Historians have characterized urban slavery as more liberal and flexible than rural plantation slavery because the urban institution usually

¹⁹David L. Lewis, District of Columbia: A Bicentennial History (New York, 1976), 42-45; Cole, "Changes for Mrs. Thornton's Arthur," 370; See also, Christopher Phillips, Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860 (Urbana, Ill., 1997), for a good discussion of the relationship between the transformation of an urban African-American population from mostly slave to mostly free and community formation and organization.

²⁰Albert Gallatin as quoted in Richard Mannix, "Albert Gallatin in Washington, 1801-1813," Records of the Columbia Historical Society (1971-1972), 61, emphasis added.

²¹Charles Jared Ingersoll, Inchiquin. The Jesuit Letters, during a late residence in the United States of America: being a fragment of a private correspondence, accidentally discovered in Europe (New York, 1810), 34-35.

allowed slaves a greater degree of autonomy and self-determination.²² However, it is likely that in Washington's earliest years, the Tayloe slaves did not yet perceive these benefits.

Fortunately for Tayloe and his slaves, the Octagon was situated, relatively speaking, in one of the more prominent neighborhoods, thus affording the slaves the opportunity to make at least some acquaintances and friends. Larger, older, and more active African-American communities could be found in the village of Georgetown and in southeast Washington, each a mile or more away from the Octagon. As of 1820, only a quarter of Washington's slaves and free blacks lived in the Octagon's neighborhood, and the few community organizations African Americans had established were located in the older areas.²³ It is difficult to know how Tayloe's slaves fared in Washington's early years. On the one hand, their movement, work, residence, and access to other African Americans was limited by Tayloe as well as by the physical environment of the city. On the other, Washington's rough nature may have provided the cover necessary for slaves to carry on their own "invisible" social lives.²⁴

²²Wade, Slavery in the Cities; Peter Parish uses the context of the "margins" of slavery to discuss the differences between urban and plantation slavery, "The Edges of Slavery in the Old South: Or, Do Exceptions Prove Rules?" Slavery and Abolition (1980), 106-125. For more recent treatments dealing with specific cities, see Phillips, Freedom's Port, especially Chapters 1 and 2; Tommy L. Bogger, Free Blacks in Norfolk, Virginia, 1790-1860: The Darker Side of Freedom (Charlottesville, 1997), especially Chapter 1; T. Stephen Whitman, The Price of Freedom: Slavery and Manumission in Baltimore and Early National Maryland (Lexington, Ky., 1997), especially Chapter 1 and 2; and, James Sidbury, Ploughshares into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel's Virginia, 1730-1810 (Cambridge, N.Y., 1997).

²³"The Sessford Annals," 273; Washington Directory of 1820; Lewis, District of Columbia, 44-45; Kathleen M. Lesko, ed., Black Georgetown Remembered: A History of its Black Community from the Founding of "The Town of George" in 1751 to the Present Day (Washington, DC, 1991), 10.

²⁴Albert Raboteau analyzes slave religion as an example of a slave "invisible institution." Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South (Oxford, 1978), Chapter 5.

Tayloe saw opportunity in Washington's early underdevelopment. Indeed, Tayloe's willingness to establish himself at such great expense in a city as embryonic as early Washington speaks to his ability to tolerate risk and calculate potential returns—both crucial entrepreneurial characteristics.²⁵ One element of Tayloe's business interests in early Washington City was land. Tayloe steadily moved profits from his rural enterprises into Washington real estate, purchasing a handful of lots almost every year. In addition to the lot he purchased on which he built the Octagon, Tayloe bought approximately 50 lots in 14 different city blocks between 1803 and 1827 valued at over \$100,000.²⁶ Furthermore, many of these lots already contained buildings and improvements. Tayloe concentrated his purchases mostly on lots situated in northwest Washington in the dozen blocks surrounding the President's Mansion, while several were in more distant Georgetown and east of the Capitol in northeast Washington. In so doing, Tayloe chose the most prosperous and reputable neighborhoods with the best chances of progress and growth. Indeed, John Sessford, a reporter for The National Intelligencer who wrote an annual feature describing the material progress of the city, repeatedly noted

²⁵The following scholars provide useful definitions of entrepreneurial behavior or activity: Stuart Bruchey, "Success and Failure Factors: American Merchants in Foreign Trade in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," Business History Review 32 (1958), 272-292; Rudolf Braun, "The Rise of a Rural Class of Entrepreneurs," Journal of World History 10 (1967), 557.

²⁶DC Land, Liber B, Volume 2, Document 1, 683/457; Liber K, Volume 10, Document 7, 150/162; Liber O, Volume 14, Document 9, 385/287; Liber S, Volume 18, Document 13, 152/124; Liber AB, Volume 27, Document 18, 93/76; Liber AK, Volume 35, Document 22, 120/93; Liber AM, Volume 37, Document 31, 188/141, Document 32, 329/239 and Document 33, 490/357; Liber AP, Volume 40, Document 35, 481/371; Liber AR, Volume 42, Document 25, 210 and Document 26, 348; Liber AS, Volume 43, Document 37, 287/200 and Volume 45, Document 27, 115/82; Liber AV, Volume 46, Document 46, 524/353. See also, Tayloe Family Papers, University of Virginia (hereafter UVA), 38-630, Box 1, Folder 1; TFP, 5: 542-558.

the construction of new buildings, road and landscaping improvements, and sidewalk installations in the neighborhood of the President's Mansion.²⁷

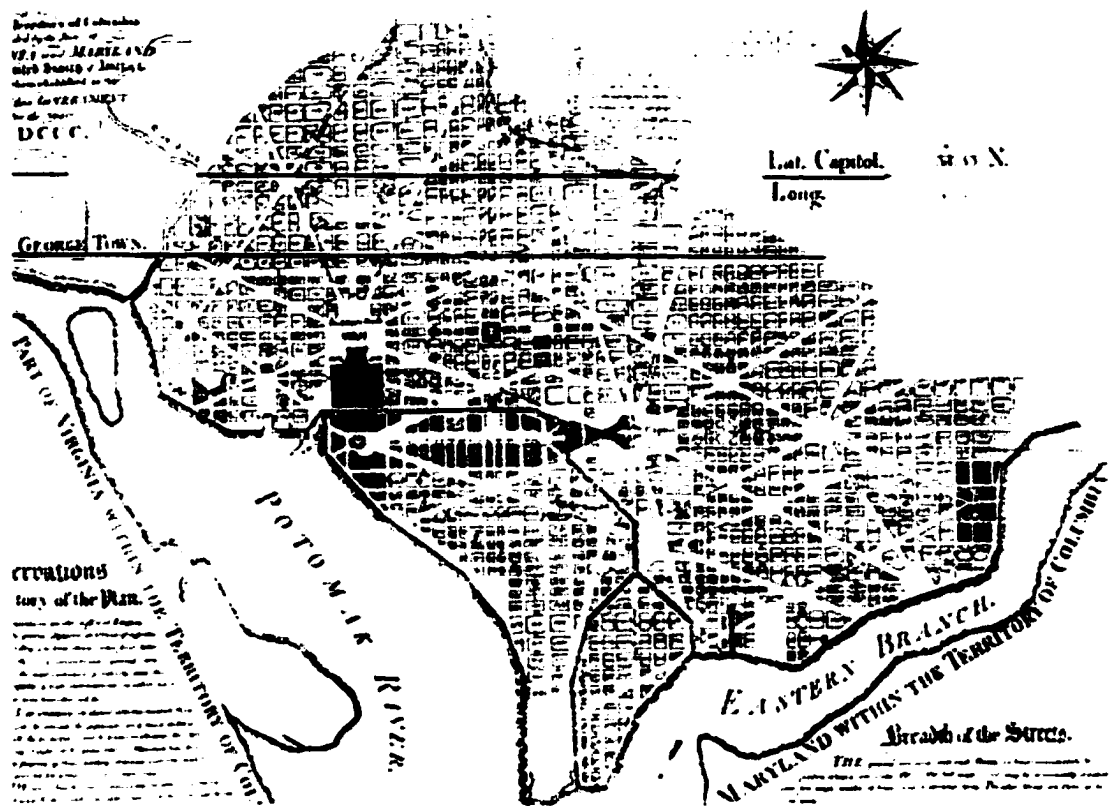
Tayloe's increasing focus on Washington City also drew his attention to several rural properties that were available in the vicinity of the city. Since Tayloe relied almost exclusively on supplies from his plantations to maintain his family during their winter stays in the city, he likely concluded that purchasing a number of outlying lands could be advantageous. During his first decade in the city, Tayloe purchased a farm named Petworth located northwest of the city on the Rock Creek Church Road. The precise purchase date for Petworth is unknown; however Tayloe operated the farm for the duration of his own lifetime and passed it to his son Benjamin, who was still listed as the owner on an 1861 map.²⁸ Tayloe owned another small farm within the bounds of the District of Columbia called Pleasant Hills, which he sold for \$216 to Charles Worthington in 1808.²⁹ Tayloe also purchased a Montgomery County, Maryland, plantation called Middlebrook. Middlebrook was an established 575-acre plantation with a house, mill, and other outbuildings. It appears that Tayloe purchased this tract in 1827 for \$24,000. However, in 1817, William Hebb of Ft. Oryth, Maryland, offered to trade one of his Baltimore plantations for Tayloe's Middlebrook. Thus, Tayloe apparently had some earlier connection to Middlebrook; he rejected Hebb's offer.³⁰

²⁷"The Sessford Annals," Records of the Columbia Historical Society (1911), 271-297.

²⁸See Petworth accounts throughout Tayloe's Daybook; Map, Library of Congress, G&M DC 88-694013 G. 3850 1861.B6; John Tayloe III Will.

²⁹DC Land, Liber U, Volume 20, Document 14, 120/69.

³⁰Deed, March 30, 1827, Tayloe Family Papers, UVA, 38-630, Box 1, Folder 9; William Hebb, Ft. Oryth, to Col. John Tayloe, Washington City, September 10, 1817, Tayloe Family Papers, UVA, 38-630, Box 1, Folder 4; TFP, 6: 114.

FIGURE 14

Map of the City of Washington in the District of Columbia, circa 1800

Tayloe put his extensive real estate holdings to use in a variety of ways. Many of the properties he leased to tenants. Tayloe rented out a lot neighboring his townhouse “for a Baptist Church . . . at \$12 a year for 5 years . . . unless I need the property, or it becomes a nuisance of which I am to be the judge.”³¹ In 1819, Tayloe subdivided lots he owned in squares 104 (New York and Virginia Avenues between 20th and 21st Streets) and 518 (G Street and 5th Street, Northwest) into smaller lots ranging from 1,900 to 4,300 square feet. He was thereby able to turn two lots into 25 parcels for tenants.³² In addition, squares 104 and 518 were located at nearly opposite ends of the city, allowing Tayloe to take advantage of the rental needs of the two different communities around the President’s Mansion and the Capitol.

Tayloe leased most of his Georgetown properties, including the “Brick House on Bridge Street” rented by one Mr. Davis by 1820.³³ He also rented out a brick stable on 14th Street for \$150 to \$300 per year to a number of tenants between 1825 and 1828.³⁴ However, the most significant rental property Tayloe owned was a hotel situated in the heart of Washington City at 14th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. In April 1816, Tayloe purchased lots 1, 2, and 16 in square 225 from Toppan Webster for \$7,300.³⁵ Part of these properties contained a row of six two-story and attic houses containing approximately 40 rooms. These buildings ultimately would become the world-renowned

³¹John Tayloe Account Book, 1812, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C3, 23.

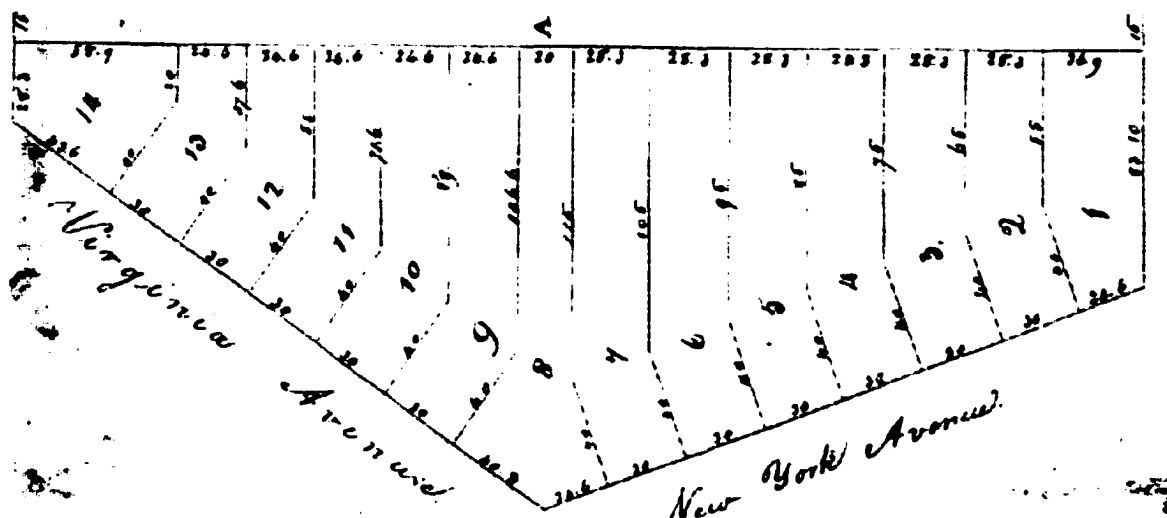
³²Plats, March 25, 1819, TFP, 5: 726, 729.

³³John Tayloe, Washington, to Mr. Davis, Georgetown, October, 16, 1820, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C1; see also, Daybook, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C4.

³⁴Agreement, October 2, 1827, TFP, 5: 795; Agreements, July 15, 1828, TFP, 7: 104.

³⁵DC Land, Liber AM, Volume 37, Document 33, 490/357; see also National Intelligencer, April 17, 1816, December 9, 1816, March 17, 1818.

FIGURE 15



Plat of Lot #1 in Square #104 subdivided into 14 smaller lots. On Virginia and New York Avenues between 20th and 21 Street West, City of Washington.
 Tayloe Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society

Willard Hotel.³⁶ The records are unclear about who constructed these buildings and first proposed to open them as a hotel. However, by 1818, Tayloe effectively leased the property to John Strother to operate as a hotel.³⁷ Tayloe included in the deal 14 of his slaves; these men and women worked as housekeepers, cooks, stablemen, and waiters, and provided other labor as necessary.³⁸ Strother attempted to manage the property until 1824, but was so deeply in debt to Tayloe, a number of city banks, and other businessmen, that Tayloe was forced to “cut off all negotiations with” Strother by 1825.³⁹

After evicting Strother, Tayloe leased the Mansion Hotel, as it became known, to Basil Williamson for \$5,000 per year. Shortly thereafter, Tayloe began expanding the hotel to include other houses on the row fronting Pennsylvania Avenue, creating a grand total of 100 hotel rooms. Once the addition was complete by 1827, Tayloe raised Williamson’s rent to \$6,000 per year.⁴⁰ Tayloe’s improvements increased the value of the property from about \$50,000 to more than \$100,000, including slaves and furnishings. Williamson was apparently a better tenant and manager than Strother, but he still had

³⁶Richard Wallace and Marie Pinak Carr, The Willard Hotel (Washington, DC, 1986); see also W. B. Bryan, A History of the National Capital from its Foundation through the Period of the Adoption of the Organic Act (New York, 1914-1916), 2: 14 note 2, 59 note 6, 61, 194. Bryan underestimates Tayloe’s role in and ownership of the hotel property.

³⁷The transactional history surrounding the Mansion Hotel between Tayloe and Strother is confusing and complicated. Tayloe sold the property to Strother in 1818, but within two years Strother was so indebted to Tayloe and other property owners that he mortgaged the property back to Tayloe. The two tried to negotiate and make other arrangements for the property between 1818 and 1825 in order to settle the financial matters, to no avail. Tayloe ultimately reclaimed the property, after some creative financing with at least three city banks and others with whom Strothers became indebted, and began leasing it to Basil Williamson in late 1825. See Deeds, 1797-1827, Washington, DC, TFP, 5: 258-274; Deed, October 24, 1825, TFP, 5: 546; DC Land, Liber AR, Volume 42, Document 26, 348.

³⁸See, for example, Deeds, 1797-1827, Washington, DC, TFP, 5: 258-274.

³⁹Quote from John Tayloe to John Strother, Washington, June 24, 1825, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C1; see also, note 11.

⁴⁰Basil Williamson, Washington, to John Tayloe, Esqr., December 6, 1825, TFP, 5: 494; Agreement, October 2, 1827, TFP, 5: 795; National Intelligencer, October 19, 1827.

occasional problems paying his rent on time. Therefore, Tayloe began to look for a buyer. Joshua Tennison considered purchasing the hotel for “sixty five thousand dollars, for the property including the stable.” Tayloe thought the business to be a “most advantageous bargain . . . for the property is well worth one hundred thousand dollars. The negroes and furniture alone are of considerable value.”⁴¹ Tennison apparently passed on Tayloe’s offer, as Tayloe’s sons received a bid of \$50,000 for the hotel one month after their father’s death in March 1828. The property finally passed out of the Tayloe family during the 1830s and went on to gain national prominence.⁴²

The Mansion Hotel was not Tayloe’s only foray into that field of investment. Tayloe owned three hotels in Prince William County, Virginia, as well as a tavern at Richmond Courthouse. Tayloe was operating the Farmers and Planters Hotel in Prince William as early as 1812, and leased the management of the property to Thomas and Edward Spence in December 1812. The Spences paid Tayloe \$152.78 for nine months’ rent in 1812.⁴³ By June 1813, Tayloe turned to John Weathers to manage the hotel. Weathers agreed to pay Tayloe \$300 per year during his five-year rental contract, as well as an additional £90 yearly in tavern expenses. Tayloe permitted Weathers the use of the surrounding houses, stables, and other outbuildings so long as Weathers returned them in at least the same condition as that in which he received them. In addition, Weathers

⁴¹John Tayloe, Washington, to Mr. Tennison, May 6, 1827, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C1.

⁴²Letter, April 26, 1828, in *Ibid.*; National Intelligencer, December 23, 1828; Bryan, The History of the National Capital, 2: 194.

⁴³John Tayloe III Account Book, 1810-1814, TFP, 1: 315.

agreed to keep the hotel “supplied with good meats, flour & meale, [and] also such Liquors of good quality as the times may offer & the calls of the House require.”⁴⁴

At about the same time, Tayloe purchased another similar business, this time a tavern, at Richmond Courthouse in Richmond County in the Northern Neck of Virginia. As the name suggests, Richmond Courthouse was the seat of the county government and was situated no more than one mile from Tayloe’s Mt. Airy Plantation. Richmond County gentleman and Tayloe neighbor John Hooe originally owned the tavern. By the spring of 1812 the property had passed into the hands of the county commissioners and from them into Tayloe’s possession for \$1,535.⁴⁵ Tayloe continued to operate the tavern, and in fact began to expand the business to include a variety of other services. In April, Tayloe purchased an adjoining lot on the main road consisting of five acres for \$400. In August, Tayloe sold a town lot he had purchased in 1806 in order to purchase another situated closer to his tavern property. On these lots Tayloe constructed a number of houses and other buildings, including a ropewalk (rope factory) for one Mr. Stanley, a tenant in one of Tayloe’s houses in the tavern complex. Stanley agreed to pay Tayloe \$140 a year during their five-year contract. Tayloe agreed to provide him with his raw materials, essentially twine, for £100 currency per year.⁴⁶ During the 1820s, Tayloe began to sell off some of these surrounding properties, although he continued to rent the tavern out to various managers as he did with the Mansion and Farmers and Planters Hotels. For \$250 a year Tayloe rented to Edwin Waller “the Tavern at Richmond Court

⁴⁴Contract, June 27, 1813, Minute Book, 1813-1818, Southern Historical Collection, M1-4485.

⁴⁵Richmond County Deed Book 19: 179; TFP, 5: 614-615.

⁴⁶Contract, June 27, 1813, Minute Book, 1813-1818; Richmond County Deed Book 18: 334; 19: 205, 208, 240.

House, with all the houses & lots thereto belonging, or usually rented with the said Tavern.” Waller also rented Tayloe’s nearby “Store House & Granary on the C[our]t House bounds” for an additional \$100. As he did with the Mansion Hotel, Tayloe included six of his slaves, five men and one woman, in these various rental agreements.⁴⁷

Tayloe operated two other small hotels, both located in Prince William County, including the Occoquan Hotel. Tayloe already owned at least three lots in Occoquan which he purchased during the spring and summer of 1814.⁴⁸ Tayloe may also have inherited other lots from his father in connection with the family’s old ironworks complex located on the outskirts of the town. There are no records as to whether these lots contained any improvements when Tayloe purchased them. However, by the end of the decade, Tayloe was operating the Occoquan Hotel on some of these parcels.⁴⁹ Finally, Tayloe also owned a hotel on his Neabsco estate called the Neabsco Hotel. The Neabsco lands had been part of the family estate since the 1720s, and there are no records that reveal when a hotel or tavern might have been established on those lands. Undoubtedly, Tayloe’s interest in operating hotels in Prince William County was related to the stage lines he owned. However, the only mention of the Neabsco Hotel comes when Tayloe’s sons sold it and 126 surrounding acres in 1831 for \$800.⁵⁰

Tayloe developed his interest in offering the stagecoach service in a circuitous manner. One of his many county government offices included that of postmaster for

⁴⁷Richmond County Deed Book 21: 427, 539; TFP, 5: 334, 614-615, 792; Receipt for Real and Personal Property Taxes, 1826, TFP, 6: 265.

⁴⁸Prince William County Deed Book 5: 270, 283; 10: 261-264; TFP, 5: 604

⁴⁹See Occoquan Hotel Accounts, John Tayloe Account Book, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C6.

⁵⁰Prince William County Deed Book 12: 273.

Richmond County.⁵¹ Tayloe held this office between roughly 1800 and 1813. As he became more entrenched in the business world of Washington City, Tayloe began to hand off his postmaster responsibilities, at one time appointing his manager Benjamin Boughton as his successor.⁵² By 1817, Tayloe moved his family permanently from his Mt. Airy Plantation to his city house. By 1818, he became involved in the postal business of the city and began operating several mail coaches. The first stageline Tayloe managed was the Dispatch & Expedition Stage that ran between Washington and Baltimore. In 1818, Tayloe made almost \$2,000 carrying mail and passengers between these two cities.⁵³

Then, in 1819, Tayloe contracted “to carry the mail from Washington via Georgetown to Fredericktown [Maryland].” When someone else also made a bid on this mail route, Tayloe offered to take only \$500 in payment for carrying the mail—\$300 below the sum advertised. Tayloe went on to say that if the competitor matched his offer, he would do it “for nothing—sooner than not procure the Contract.” Tayloe even indicated that he would be willing to pay for the contract.⁵⁴ Tayloe considered carrying the mail to be an extraordinary business opportunity as mail coaches, which ran on a particular and reliable schedule, also provided passenger transportation—the truly profitable end of the business. Tayloe won the Washington-Georgetown-Frederick

⁵¹See, for example, Postal Ledger, 1812-1813, TFP, 3: 639-657.

⁵²Gideon Granger, General Post Office, City of Washington, to John Tayloe, Esq., Post-master at Richmond C.H., VA, TFP, 5: 321.

⁵³Daybook, Stages Accounts (C4); Stages Accounts, John Tayloe Account Book, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C6.

⁵⁴John Tayloe, Washington, to The Hon[orable] Post Mast[er] Gen[era]l, October 1, 1819 and October 2, 1819, John Tayloe Letter Book, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C1.

contract, although its particular terms have not survived. In the first year that he operated both lines, Tayloe made \$4,387.16, more than doubling his revenue from the previous year.⁵⁵

With the stage business going so well, Tayloe decided to purchase a second post coach during the winter of 1820. Tayloe's third son, William Henry, placed the order on his father's behalf. Tayloe ordered the coach from a reputable coachmaker named Joseph Smith of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and wanted the new coach "to correspond with his Coach, now running from this, to Frederick, except being on a larger scale [nine-passenger]." As Tayloe doubtless intended, it would have been difficult to miss his coaches coming down the road. The body of the coach was "Grass Green" and "Vermillion." Large black lettering on each side depicted the route of the "Washington, Georgetown & Frederick U.S. Mail Coach" and drawings of clocks indicated departure times. The coach also included an oversized mail bag ("as its to take in the Great Western Mail") and a baggage box "of sufficient size to carry all that Nine Passengers would ever take with them." Plated handles, brass lamps, and a glossy varnish completed the exterior of the coach. The interior consisted of at least three bench seats covered with a fine russet leather, including one that turned over allowing passengers to get in and out. Tayloe promised Smith future custom work if the quality of this stage was good, as he anticipated wanting "other carriages soon for my Southern route."⁵⁶

Within a year or two, Tayloe bought out his competition for the most prominent southern mail route. One Mr. P. Hewitt of Alexandria operated the line that ran from

⁵⁵Stages Account, John Tayloe Account Book.

⁵⁶William Henry Tayloe for John Tayloe, Washington City, to Mr. Joseph Smith, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, January 17, 1820, John Tayloe Letter Book (C1).

Washington City to Stafford Courthouse by way of Alexandria and Dumfries. Tayloe offered to buy his horses and stage and wanted Hewitt to not only agree not to attempt to procure the contract but also to do everything to help Tayloe get it. Once accomplished, this route in 1822 brought Tayloe a postal salary alone of \$6,100, minus \$912 in bridge tolls. Tayloe's interest in obtaining the southern mail route corresponds to his opening of the Occoquan and, likely, Neabsco Hotels. Tayloe often alternated between Occoquan and Dumfries as stopping points on the southern route. He realized that coach stops at his Prince William County hotels and taverns meant additional food and beverage revenue from his stagecoach passengers. By the mid-1820s, Tayloe decided to concentrate his energies in Occoquan solely on the stageline and sold his hotel there to Michael Cleary. In exchange for providing Tayloe and his family free accommodations at the hotel as long as he was in charge of the mail, Tayloe supplied Cleary and the hotel with 500 pickled shad from his Deep Hole Fishery.⁵⁷ Tayloe made bids for other lines in Virginia as well, including the line from Stafford Courthouse south to Fredericksburg and from there on to Bowling Green. Tayloe anticipated that these two lines would bring him almost a \$5,000 postal salary.⁵⁸ Altogether, Tayloe's stageline business consisted of two large passenger coaches, two smaller mail coaches, and six mail carts; it employed at least 16 horses, and provided an important and needed service to residents of and visitors to rural Virginia.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Articles of Agreement, March 25, 1826, TFP, 5: 759; Prince William County Deed Book 10: 261-264.

⁵⁸John Tayloe, Washington, to Mr. P. Hewitt of Alex[andri]a, September 20, 1822; John Tayloe, Washington, to Hon[orable] Postmaster Gen[eral], October 10, 1822; William Henry Tayloe, Washington, to Hon[orable] Postmaster Gen[eral], October 10, 1822, in John Tayloe Letter Book (C1).

⁵⁹John Tayloe, Washington, to Wilson Allen, February 20, 1823, John Tayloe Letter Book (C1). For a brief description of the state of early national transportation networks in the South, see Richard Norton Smith, Patriarch: George Washington and the New American Nation (Boston, 1993), 30.

Tayloe operated his hotels, taverns, and stagelines as interconnected parts of a larger whole. Each benefited from the other and helped make all even more successful and profitable. In addition, Tayloe's stagelines helped make another area of Tayloe's rural estate more profitable: his stables. John Tayloe III was known internationally for the quality of his stables and his interest in horse breeding and racing. Tayloe's horses consistently won prizes at various horse races in the Chesapeake region, including those at the track Tayloe himself built in Washington City just four blocks from the President's Mansion. In addition, Tayloe created a business of breeding race horses past their racing prime. While there was undoubtedly an element of sport and leisure to Tayloe's interest in horses, he also made a regular income from them. Altogether, his racing and breeding activities brought Tayloe a minimum of £500 each year.⁶⁰ Tayloe's stagecoach business created a new outlet for his surplus stock of horses, as he repeatedly noted in his horse account books that they had "gone to the stage."⁶¹

Simultaneously, Tayloe was becoming interested in other forms of transportation and internal improvement projects. In the years before Tayloe moved permanently to Washington, he repeatedly purchased shares of Washington Bridge Company stock in an effort to support the company's construction of a bridge across the Potomac River linking Washington City and the Virginia side of the river. Tayloe purchased a minimum of 100 shares worth \$50 each between 1807 and 1811.⁶² Such a bridge certainly would have

⁶⁰John Tayloe Horse Account Book, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C2; Bryan, A History of the National Capital, 1: 304, 609; "List of the Stud formerly owned by Colo. John Tayloe [from] American Farmer vol. 6, page 50," TFP, 14: 530-532; John Tayloe III and Benjamin Ogle Tayloe Account Book, 1791-1834, [hereafter "Racebook"], Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2418C2.

⁶¹John Tayloe Horse Account Book; Racebook.

⁶²Memorandum of an Agreement, May 28, 1808, TFP, 5: 774; Receipt for Washington Bridge Stock, January 3, 1811, TFP, 6: 134.

been of interest to Tayloe, who traveled back and forth with his family and slaves each October and March. While he accomplished many of these frequent moves with his own line of sloops and schooners, his slave coachmen drove his coaches back and forth between his rural and urban estates and used a ferry to cross the Potomac.

More significant was Tayloe's growing interest in new forms of transportation, especially steamboats and canals. As early as 1819, Tayloe began recording expenses for the Potomac Steam Boat Company, in which he invested at least \$500. By 1822, Tayloe was so interested in this new mode of travel that he considered renting or selling to a Mr. Woolfolk of Bowling Green his "horses, coaches, and stables in Occoquan." Tayloe explained that he hoped "to build this winter & start in the Spring [from his landing at Occoquan] as fine a Steam Boat as ever floated." Similarly, Tayloe also invested in the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company during the late 1820s; he pledged \$2,500 to the company in 1827.⁶³ Tayloe increasingly thought it would be more efficient and profitable to transport both mail and passengers by boat. Like other leaders of the early national period, Tayloe recognized the importance and potential of internal improvements and expanded transportation networks.⁶⁴

Tayloe's involvement in transportation and internal improvement projects developed hand in hand with his interest in banking. Before Tayloe even built his city house, he began purchasing shares of stock in a variety of only recently formed financial institutions. Banks were innovative commercial institutions that furthered the economic

⁶³Daybook; John Tayloe to Wilson Allen; Receipt, TFP, 6: 279; TFP, 5: 810.

⁶⁴On the early national debate over the benefits of internal improvements, see McCoy, The Elusive Republic, *passim*; Lawrence Frederick Kohl, The Politics of Individualism: Parties and the American Character in the Jacksonian Era (New York, 1989), *passim*; see also, Carol Sheriff, The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862 (New York, 1996), 15-16.

development of their surrounding communities and the credit of individual borrowers.

That Tayloe and other southerner businessmen believed in the necessity and potential of banks for furthering economic development and diversification speaks to their entrepreneurial character.⁶⁵ In 1796, Tayloe purchased eight shares of stock in the Bank of Alexandria—the first of many banks in which he invested.⁶⁶ Tayloe also purchased 200 shares of stock in the Bank of Washington by 1812 and almost 5,000 shares valued at nearly \$6,000 in the Bank of the Metropolis between 1814 and 1816. By the end of the decade, Tayloe held a directorship with the Bank of the Metropolis as well. In 1825, Tayloe was again elected to be a director, this time with the Union Bank of Georgetown.⁶⁷

Tayloe's longest and most important relationship with a bank involved the controversial Bank of the United States (BUS). Congress chartered a national bank, the First BUS, in 1791 and extended the charter for a Second BUS in 1816. The BUS was one part of Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton's economic vision for stabilizing the economy of the new nation and encouraging economic development. It also turned out to be one of the most divisive political issues in the history of the new nation because it represented, Republicans thought, a ruinous divergence from America's

⁶⁵For one analysis of the significance of banks in the northern business community from a sharp critic of early southern commercial activity, see Doerflinger, *The Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise*, 296-298. For a broader discussion of southern interest in banks and banking during the early national period, see A. Glenn Crothers, "'The Projecting Spirit': Social, Economic and Cultural Change in Post-Revolutionary Northern Virginia, 1780-1805," unpublished dissertation, University of Florida, 1997.

⁶⁶Stock Certificates, Herbert Family Papers, VHS, Mss1H4155A23-30.

⁶⁷Toppan Webster to John Tayloe III, December 21, 1809, TFP, 5: 491; James Magruder Account, 1814, TFP, 6: 135; John Magruder, War Office, to John Tayloe III, TFP, 5: 421-424; John Tayloe III, Washington, to John Stith, June 25, 1819, John Tayloe Letter Book (C1); TFP, 5: 814, 823-824; David English, Union Bank of Georgetown, to Col. John Tayloe, April 6, 1825, TFP, 5: 301.

classical republican roots.⁶⁸ A committed Federalist, Tayloe wholly supported Hamilton's vision of America as an advanced commercial republic and, though himself a big planter, thought little of the Republicans' agrarian emphasis. Tayloe wrote approvingly to a friend in 1808 that "matters auger well to the East, where the Elections have turned out completely Federal . . . [and] I begin to sing Laus Deo" for the end of the "Commercial Quakery" of the Republicans.⁶⁹ Tayloe could become quite impassioned on the subject of national economic policy. At a dinner at his city house during the 1810 winter holidays, he offended Benjamin Latrobe with his "Newspaper ribaldry" in criticizing President Thomas Jefferson.⁷⁰ Tayloe's Federalist leanings perfectly illustrate his ability to recognize profitable opportunities in new commercial arenas; his status as a big planter did not keep him from supporting diversification and schemes that would support economic development.

Beginning in 1808, Tayloe was elected to be a Director of the BUS. Tayloe served in this capacity until at least the mid-1820s and probably until his death in 1828. Holding office was not the only means through which Tayloe supported the bank. In 1817, 1819, and 1823, he purchased more than \$10,000 worth of stock in the BUS.⁷¹ Ill health in 1819 caused him temporarily to resign his board seats with both the BUS and

⁶⁸For more on the controversy surrounding the Bank of the United States, see, McCoy, The Elusive Republic, Chapter 6; Kohl, The Politics of Individualism, Chapter 1 and *passim*.

⁶⁹John Tayloe to J. Milton, near Battle-Town, Frederick County, September 19, 1808, Hammond Family Papers, VHS, Ms2H1858B. For a discussion of the ideological differences between the Federalists (or Hamiltonians) and Republicans (or Jeffersonians), see Linda Kerber, Federalists in Dissent: Imagery and Ideology in Jeffersonian America (Ithaca, 1970) and McCoy, The Elusive Republic.

⁷⁰Benjamin Latrobe to Joshua Gilpin, January 3, 1811, in John C. Van Horne and Lee Formwalt, eds., The Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe (New Haven, 1984, 1988), 2: 3.

⁷¹James Davidson, Office of Discount and Deposit, Washington, to John Tayloe III, February 6, 1808, TFP, 5: 290; Receipt, January 17, 1817, TFP, 6: 142; Richard Smith, Cashier, Bank of the United States, to John Tayloe, January 29, 1821, TFP, 5: 450, 452; TFP, 5: 815, 817.

the Bank of the Metropolis. But by the early 1820s, he was able to resume his old positions.⁷² Upon rejoining, Tayloe contracted with the BUS to exchange properties so that the bank could expand and obtain a more prestigious location. The bank's original home was at the corner of F and 13th Streets, about three blocks from the rear of the White House grounds. Tayloe's land, on square 221 diagonally across from the front of the President's Mansion on Lafayette Square, was, the bank admitted, "the most eligible [property] that could be selected in our City." As a director with the bank's best interests in mind, Tayloe made the switch at a cost to himself personally of about \$7,000. A comment Tayloe made several years earlier explained his willingness to take such a loss. When Tayloe's ill health had forced him to resign in 1819, he had signed his resignation letter, "With a fervent prayer for its [the BUS] future prosperity." He therefore likely viewed his personal loss as an opportunity for prosperity for both the bank and ultimately himself—a view that must have been further confirmed when one Mr. B. Cottringer of Washington wrote Tayloe asking for first "refusal when you are disposed to rent" the old bank property.⁷³

Tayloe felt strongly about the social necessity and personal profit-potential of banks. In 1812, Tayloe circulated his own proposal for a new bank among several close associates. While this document has not survived, an appraisal of his proposal by Francis Corbin of Virginia has. Corbin thought, "Your Project of a Bank is in some respects better, in others worse than those which have preceded it." Corbin apparently thought the faults of Tayloe's proposed bank to be minor, as he agreed to invest one-tenth, or

⁷²February 22, 1819 letter, John Tayloe Letter Book (C1).

⁷³Contract between the Bank of the United States and John Tayloe, March 13, 1823, TFP, 5: 802-803; B. Cottringer, Washington, to John Tayloe III, Mt. Airy, May 18, 1823.

\$25,000, of the start-up capital the bank would require.⁷⁴ The outcome of Tayloe's proposal is unknown. However, Corbin wrote a letter to Tayloe just nine months after the previous exchange that suggests one possibility. Corbin had observed in Washington's National Intelligencer that a petition for the incorporation of a new bank had been presented to Congress and wondered whether it was the one Tayloe had conceived.⁷⁵ Perhaps Tayloe had indeed continued to pursue the idea of founding his own bank in the city.

Tayloe left another indication of his commitment to and belief in banks. In addition to shares of stock in the Washington Tontine life insurance company, Tayloe bequeathed to each of his daughters \$20,000 worth of stock in the Bank of the United States. Tayloe's executors were to "apply the dividends, interest or profits of said Stock or Securities to the use & benefit of my said daughter[s]." Wanting to further provide for and protect his daughters, Tayloe ordered that his executors arrange a trust wherein "the dividends, interests or profits thereof shall be utterly free from the power or control of the husband[s] of my s[ai]d daughters."⁷⁶

In addition to city land speculation and leasing, internal improvements, and banks, Tayloe's involvement with the business life of the city and his relationships with other urban businessmen introduced him to other investment opportunities. One of the earliest investments Tayloe considered was William Thornton's North Carolina Gold Mine Company. Ultimately, Tayloe decided against investing, causing a disappointed

⁷⁴Francis Corbin to John Tayloe, City of Washington, April 23, 1812, Tayloe Family Papers, UVA, 38-630, Box 1, Folder 3.

⁷⁵Francis Corbin, White Chimnies, Virginia, to John Tayloe, City of Washington, January 30, 1813, Tayloe Family Papers, UVA, 38-630, Box 1, Folder 3.

⁷⁶Tontine Company Stock Certificates, TFP, 5: 808-809; Will of John Tayloe III, 1828, TFP, 6: 407-435.

Thornton to write, "I am sorry that you have desired me to strike out your name, as it had been arranged that you were to be a Director." However, Tayloe's consideration of Thornton's scheme represents the new business relationships Tayloe began to build in the city. Thornton was an inventor, physician, and philosopher of sorts. As Tayloe's son Benjamin Ogle remembered him, "He had a well-earned reputation for letters and taste; he was a wit, a painter, and a poet." However, Thornton was best known for his self-taught architectural skills and talent, embodied most famously in the United States Capitol building. Upon purchasing a lot in the new city, Tayloe had contracted with Thornton to design his town house and oversee the construction. Five years after the completion of one of Washington's finest examples of Federal period architecture, the Octagon, Tayloe and Thornton were still working together on various schemes including Thornton's mining company.⁷⁷ Thornton's disappointment at losing Tayloe's support is understandable; in 1806, Tayloe's contemporaries "considered as the richest man in Virginia."⁷⁸

Thornton's mining project was not the only such scheme that Tayloe considered. Tayloe's fourth son, Edward Thornton Tayloe, made a career in the military and during the mid-1820s found himself stationed in Mexico. Edward excitedly informed his father that two new American mining companies based in Baltimore and New York had opened at least a dozen silver mines between them. He detailed the arrangements of both companies to his father and recommended the New York firm over that from Baltimore. The younger Tayloe himself purchased \$375 worth of shares in the New York company's

⁷⁷McCue, *The Octagon*, 4, 26, 47.

⁷⁸Sir Augustus Foster, British Minister to the United States, as quoted in *Ibid.*, 23.

silver mines, and urged his father to do the same. Tayloe expressed an interest, but his final decision is not known.⁷⁹

Tayloe's consideration of investing in such distant mining ventures is perhaps not surprising given his own mining concerns in Virginia. He continued to operate the family's Neabsco and Occoquan ironworks, although both were deteriorating physically and productively by the 1790s. The only remaining mention of the Occoquan estate during this time is through a series of negotiations between Tayloe and Presly Thornton of Northumberland County. Tayloe's and Thornton's fathers had been the founding partners of the Occoquan Ironworks, and both men bequeathed their shares in the estate to their sons. Tayloe therefore owned three-quarters of the estate, while Thornton inherited the remaining one-quarter. The younger Thornton apparently had little desire to be an ironmaster, however, and wanted to dispose of his small share in the estate. During the 1790s, Tayloe and Thornton arranged for Tayloe to become the sole owner of the entire works, which were valued at as much as £20,000. In return, Tayloe released Thornton from all debts then on the books owed by the estate.⁸⁰

Throughout the 1790s, Tayloe's manager at Neabsco was William Holburne, who had begun his career with the Tayloes under John Tayloe II. Holburne oversaw the production of pig iron at Neabsco, handled all the marketing arrangements, and managed

⁷⁹Edward Tayloe, Mexico, to John Tayloe, City of Washington, October 5, 1825, December 7, 1825, Tayloe Family Papers, UVA, 38-630, Box 1, Folder 5.

⁸⁰Fredericksburg Court Records, File 171. This file contains several dozen court documents that resulted from the arrangement between Tayloe and Thornton. After making this agreement, Tayloe discovered that his father's manager, Thomas Lawson, had neglected to include his salary in the accounts for thirty years. Therefore, the outstanding book debts were actually much more significant than Tayloe had known when he struck the bargain with Thornton. The estates of John Tayloe II and Thomas Lawson thus instituted suits against each other over these debts, which resulted in an extremely rich set of sources on both Neabsco and Occoquan.

the labor of the numerous slave ironworkers and agricultural field hands. However, Holburne faced a serious problem in making Neabsco profitable and productive—an increasing deficiency in natural resources. Neabsco had been producing iron for over 60 years, and thus had also been steadily stripping the surrounding acres of the lumber required for making charcoal. Benjamin Latrobe visited Neabsco during this period and described the state of the works as of 1796:

It is not a work of any considerable Magnitude. Eight Hands by day and 8 by night are employed in it. It labours under this very great disadvantage, that all the Ore smelted in it is brought by Water from the Eastern shore of Maryland, to the Mouth of Occoquan bay and then carried by Waggons 2 Miles to the Furnace over very wretched roads. It is in blast only every third year. The woods which furnish Charcoal, already begin to feel a deficiency, although some thousand acres are appropriated to the Supply.⁸¹

While Tayloe and his managers had always been able to overcome the transportation-related problems Latrobe described, they could do little to mitigate the loss of the necessary natural resources.

In addition, Holburne was attempting to market his small quantities of pig iron in direct competition with the new western iron industry. Beginning during the revolutionary era, ironmasters increasingly moved west in search of better ore deposits and more plentiful natural resources (see Appendix 2). Once established, the older works such as Neabsco simply could not compete. Firms in western Virginia and Tennessee such as David Ross's Oxford Furnace and William Weaver's Buffalo Forge produced a

⁸¹Edward C. Carter II, ed., The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1795-1798 (New Haven, 1977), 1: 174.

large and steady stream of high-quality iron⁸²; in his famous Notes on the State of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson commented on the productivity of the new western furnaces and forges.⁸³ Meanwhile, Tayloe regularly faced low prices at market, high supply and shipping costs, and a variety of resource deficiencies.

Tayloe was quick to confront the new reality of his family's once-profitable ironworks. Between 1794 and 1800, he sold 11 tracts of Neabsco land totaling over 1,800 acres—more than one-third of the original 5,000-acre iron plantation.⁸⁴ As with the sale of his Fredericksburg properties, Tayloe directed much of the income derived from these land sales into Washington real estate. By 1805, Tayloe decided to withdraw from Neabsco altogether. He advertised the property in the Virginia Gazette and other area newspapers: “For Sale. Neabsco Furnace And its appendages, with four or five thousands acres of LAND, adjoining, near the town of Dumfries, and within three or four miles of the Potomack river A valuable MINE BANK in Maryland, may be had with the Furnace, if required.” Recognizing what remained valuable in the property, Tayloe pointed out that “THE soil is generally adapted to the produce of small grain.”⁸⁵

When he failed to find a buyer, Tayloe adjusted operations at Neabsco to take advantage of its remaining profitable features: land and slaves. Two activities dominated slave life at Neabsco in the years following the closing of the furnace: grain agriculture and craft trades. As he did on the Mt. Airy Department plantations, Tayloe cultivated the

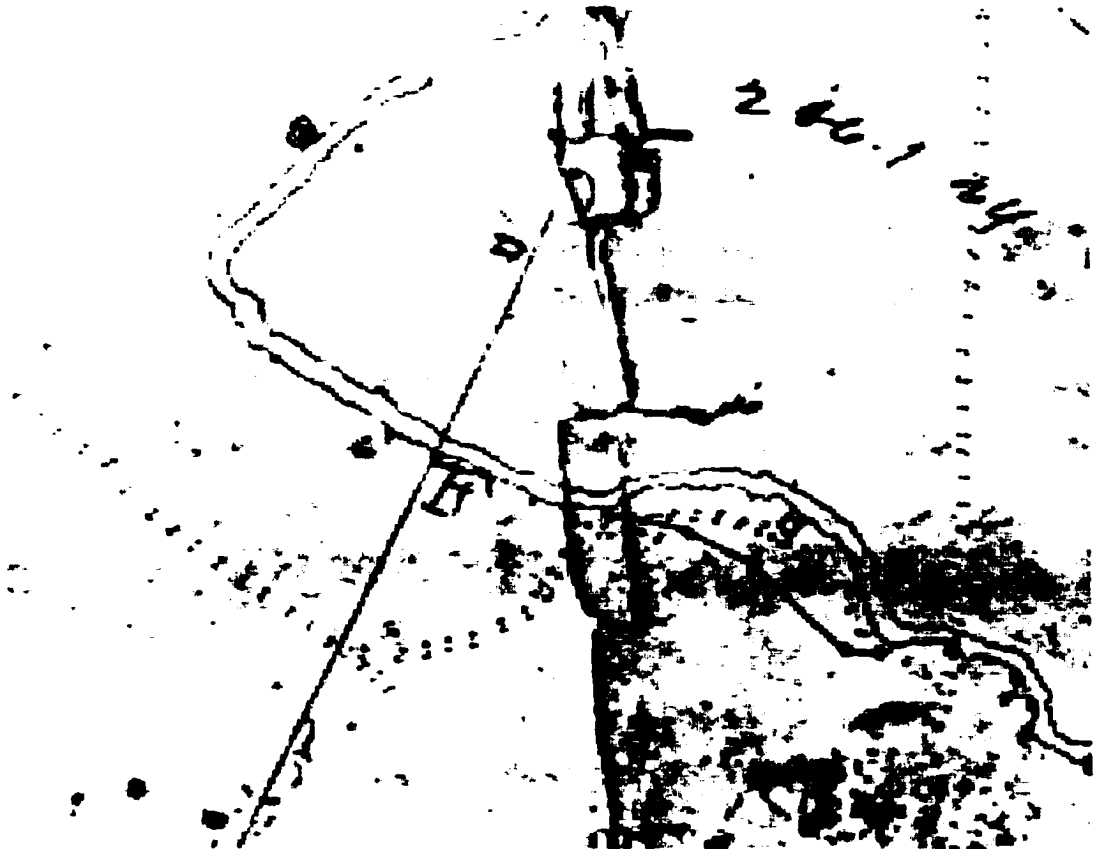
⁸²See, for example, Charles Dew, Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge (New York, 1994); Dew, “David Ross and the Oxford Iron Works: A Study of Industrial Slavery in the Early Nineteenth-Century South,” WMQ 3d ser., 31 (April 1974).

⁸³William Peden, ed., Notes on the State of Virginia, by Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1982), 27-28.

⁸⁴Prince William County Deed Book Y: 484, 618, 621, 623, 732; Z: 112; 1: 57; 2: 306; TFP, 5: 602.

⁸⁵The Virginia Gazette and Daily Advertiser, August 10, 1805.

FIGURE 16



Map of Col. John Tayloe's Neabsco Estate, 1828
The "F" marks the location of the Neabsco furnace on Neabsco Creek.
Virginia Historical Society

majority of his acreage at Neabsco in wheat, corn, and a variety of other grains. This produce supported the still large resident slave population, brought small profits at market, and also assisted in supplying the Tayloe family's needs when in residence at the city house. The latter purpose became even more important once the large family moved permanently to Washington around 1817.⁸⁶ In addition, a majority of the slaves still plied a variety of craft trades at Neabsco. For obvious reasons, skilled slaves had always predominated in the population at the ironworks. Therefore, Neabsco steadily developed a reputation in Prince William County as a center for quality services and trades such as blacksmithing, carpentry, shipbuilding, and spinning and weaving. Slaves remained active in all of these areas, as well as others, even after iron production ceased. In 1824, for example, 92 slaves still resided at Neabsco, and held occupations including ship and house carpenters, sailors, blacksmiths, hostlers, millers, waggoners, weavers, spinners, cooks, laundresses, knitters, wheelwrights, woodcutters, coach hands, jobbers, hog minders, and house servants. The "Working Hands" or field hands numbered only 13 of the 92, and included two plowmen and two cotton pickers. Eleven of the 92 were "Old" and were given only occasional small jobs so as "to be kept from idleness." Therefore, 74% (68/92) were skilled or semi-skilled and worked almost solely plying their craft or trade for Tayloe and neighborhood customers.⁸⁷

Even though Tayloe managed to maintain Neabsco's profitability in other ways, he remained interested in iron manufacturing and adjusted easily to the new realities of

⁸⁶For an idea of the variety of articles the Tayloes had shipped from their various plantations to Washington, see Minute Book, 1813-1818; "A list of Articles for Mrs. Tayloes City House in Washington Sent from the Rappahannock Farms by Capt. Haney," November 1828, TFP, 27:513.

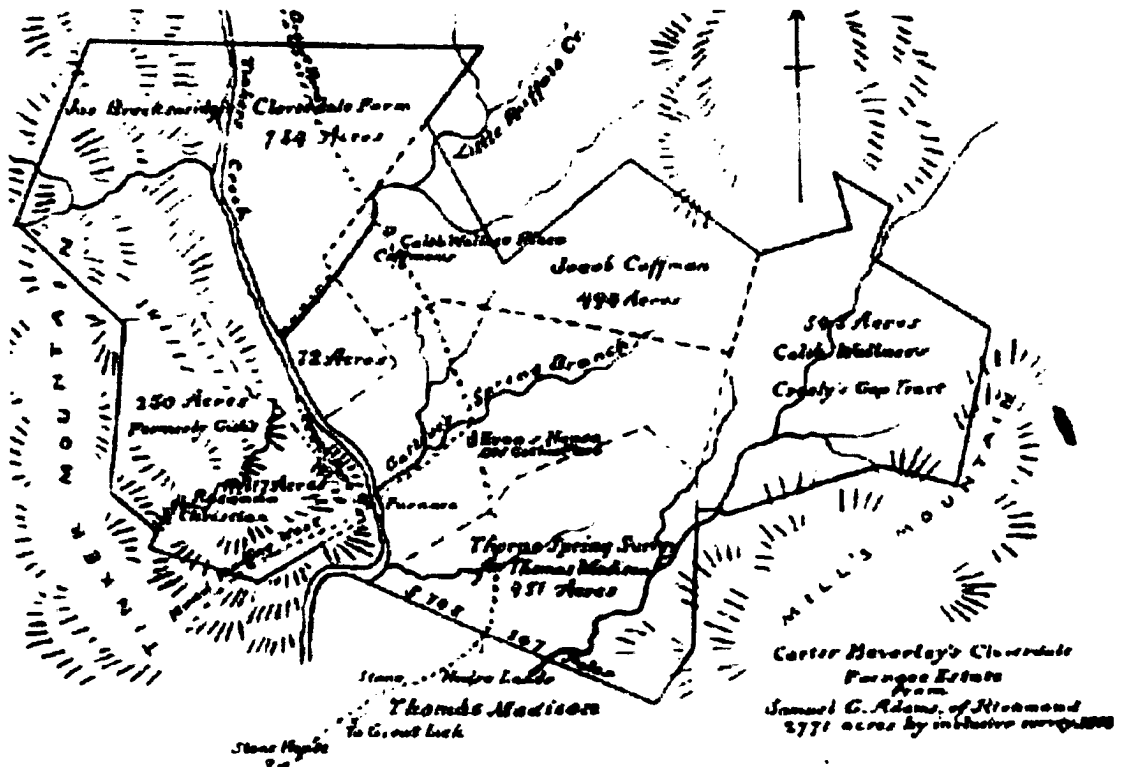
⁸⁷"Working Hands Belonging to Neabsco," 1824, TFP, 27: 773.

the industry. By 1810, Tayloe had honed his ability to recognize new economic situations and respond accordingly. Realizing the changes in the post-revolutionary market, Tayloe made his first entrepreneurial adjustment in shifting his agricultural emphasis away from tobacco and towards mixed-crop grains. Shortly thereafter, Tayloe leapt at the chance to become a part of a new urban enterprise, the city of Washington, as well as all the related businesses he knew would be part of the city. Thus, Neabsco's decline was not a stumbling block for Tayloe; it simply represented another opportunity for adjustment. Tayloe recognized, as certainly anyone related to the industry did, that the new locus of the iron industry had shifted to the west. Tayloe therefore closely watched and waited for the perfect opportunity to make itself available.

During the spring of 1810, just such an opportunity arose. Both a forge and a furnace became available on Tinker Creek in Botetourt County. James Breckinridge and Carter Beverly, the remaining partners in an ironworks that had been in operation as early as 1787, sold Tayloe the Cloverdale Furnace and Brunswick Forge. Tayloe paid Beverly £20,000 for the 13 tracts that constituted Brunswick, including a 187-acre "Ore Bank Tract." He paid Breckinridge a comparatively low £1,900 for Cloverdale's 751 acres.⁸⁸ Thereafter, Tayloe spent several years fine-tuning the layout and composition of his

⁸⁸Botetourt County Deed Book 10: 47, 71; TFP, 5: 647. For a history of Cloverdale's earliest years, see Jeffrey C. Turner, "Cloverdale Furnace: A Century of Iron Manufacture in Botetourt County, Virginia, 1789-1889," Master's Thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1984; F. B. Kegley, Kegley's Virginia Frontier: The Beginning of the Southwest, the Roanoke of Colonial Days, 1740-1783 (Roanoke, Va., 1938), 496, 511; Helen Prillaman, Places Near the Mountain: From the Community of Amsterdam, Virginia up the Road to Catawba (Roanoke, Va., 1985), 150-162.

FIGURE 17



Map of Carter Beverley's Cloverdale Furnace Estate, 1808
Purchased by John Tayloe III in 1810.

From F. B. Kegley, Kegley's Virginia Frontier: The Beginning of the Southwest, the Roanoke of Colonial Days, 1740-1783 (Roanoke, Va.), 1938, 512.

Botetourt County estate, ultimately expanding it to include two additional works called Martha's Furnace and Tayloe's Slitting Mill Forge.⁸⁹

The extent of Tayloe's iron business during the 1810s is difficult to discern, as few accounts or other records remain. While it almost certainly operated regularly, the only record of the furnace's activity is a receipt for just over six tons of pig iron bought by James Sanderson in July of 1811 for \$777.43.⁹⁰ However, it is clear that the Brunswick Forge was productive and in working condition when Tayloe purchased it. Tayloe likely maintained whatever successful business contacts and arrangements Beverly and Breckinridge had previously established. One month after purchasing the works, Tayloe was working with a Richmond businessman named Archibald McCall to market his iron. In June of 1810, McCall advertised that he would be carrying "JOHN TAYLOE'S fine MALLEABLE BAR IRON" and that he "expects a boat load of it every day." He encouraged the "Smiths in this place [Richmond] and Petersburg," "the Blacksmiths and Merchants on the River and Norfolk," as well as all those out "in the country" to stop by his shop and test the quality of Tayloe's bar iron.⁹¹

In July of 1810 McCall announced that he had just received about "seven tons of [bar iron]," and noted that "a much larger quantity is daily expected, and constantly kept here." By September, McCall noted that he had sent some of Tayloe's iron to a master armorer in Philadelphia, who judged that it "makes as fine steel as ever was seen, and that the guns made from it surpass any ever made." Tayloe also began supplying the "Publick

⁸⁹Advertisement by William Gordon on behalf of John Tayloe, Beale Family Papers, VHS; Botetourt County Deed Book 10: 152; 11: 481, 550; Tayloe's Slitting Mill Forge and Brunswick Forge Logs, Tate Thompson Brady Papers.

⁹⁰Cloverdale #1 Furnace Log, Tate Thompson Brady Papers, VHS, Mss7:3 HD9510B7298:1.

⁹¹The Enquirer, June 29, 1810; The Virginia Patriot, July 24, 1810.

Manufactory of arms,” which likely meant John Ballendine’s Westham Forge in Henrico County near Richmond City.⁹² Tayloe sold his goods either “in wholesale or retail on moderate terms” and also began supplying McCall with “Mill Spindles, Axletrees,” and other cast products in addition to his bar iron.⁹³

The year 1817 was an important one for Tayloe’s western ironworks. In 1816 and 1817, Tayloe greatly expanded the size and value of the estate, adding almost 2,000 acres valued at over \$30,000. Tayloe purchased most of this new acreage from Thomas Madison in order to “to support the Furnace” with plentiful natural resources. Tayloe also “engaged a mason from Wythe County to rebuild the stack” for \$300, improving its efficiency for continued production.⁹⁴ At a minimum, Tayloe’s Botetourt County estate in 1817 included over 7,000 acres. Cloverdale’s appraised value was \$112,595, not including the Brunswick Forge, Martha’s Furnace, or the Slitting Mill. As importantly, in 1817 Tayloe inventoried the Cloverdale Furnace estate, providing the best single glimpse into the lives of the slave workforce that manufactured Tayloe’s iron.

One-hundred twenty-four slaves worth over \$40,000, both men and women, labored in a variety of capacities at Cloverdale. Tayloe sent at least 32 Mt. Airy Department slaves to Cloverdale between 1810 and 1817, of whom 13 can be identified on the 1817 Cloverdale inventory.⁹⁵ Ralph came from Gwinfield in 1810 and learned the skills of a collier at Cloverdale. Old House’s Prince, Lewis, Nelson, and Peter arrived at

⁹²Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, September 12, 1810.

⁹³The Virginia Patriot, November 23, 1810; The Enquirer, November 27, 1810.

⁹⁴Botetourt County Deed Book 12: 17; 13: 80; see also, William Gordon, Cloverdale, to Colo. John Tayloe, Washington City, August 3, 1817, Tayloe Family Papers, UVA, 38-630, Box 1, Folder 4.

⁹⁵Slave Inventories, 1810-1818, TFP, 6: 322-347.

Cloverdale in 1810 and took on the occupations respectively of shoemaker, blacksmith, field hand, and woodcutter. Phill, Joe, Farmer, Cambridge, Harrington, and Bridget also arrived in 1810 from Doctors Hall.⁹⁶ At least 58 of the 124 slaves occupied skilled positions, most of which were related directly to iron production. Pleasant and Charles held the key position of keeper, while Farmer worked as a gutterman and Harrington and Cambridge as fillers. These were the men most responsible for the quality of the final product. Others worked as woodhaulers, ore burners, carpenters, blacksmiths, wagoners, shoemakers, millers, colliers, cooks, miners, jobbers, spinners, and even basket makers. Thirty other adults labored in the fields, cultivating grains to sustain the large resident population and sell at market.⁹⁷

Tayloe felt his only deficiency was in men able to cut wood. His overseer, William Gordon, reported that “I am furnished with every thing necessary in carrying on the works, except woodChoppers. I am afraid they can’t be got in this Country at any price, to cut wood necessary for the furnace.” Thus, within months Tayloe began advertising for “fifteen to twenty stout, able bodied and healthy men [who] would meet with constant employment as wood cutters, at my Cloverdale Farm.” Tayloe specifically invited “Dutch” (that is, German) men to apply as a “Dutch” settlement existed nearby in which they could live.⁹⁸ By 1822, Tayloe’s bid for white wage workers had been successful, as his manager described to Benjamin Ogle Tayloe that “we employ from 4 to

⁹⁶Slave Inventories, 1810-1818; List and Valuation of the Property at Cloverdale Furnace, December 1, 1817, TFP, 27: 505-508.

⁹⁷List and Valuation of the Property at Cloverdale Furnace.

⁹⁸National Intelligencer, 1818; Gordon to Tayloe, August 3, 1817.

10 white men, to assist in the different [tasks]—but particularly wood cutters—We employ two Teams that do all our Work in that way.”⁹⁹

The size of the slave labor force had grown by 1822 as well, although the majority remained skilled and in occupations related to the production of iron. William Gordon, overseer at Cloverdale, inventoried the estate and counted “151 the whole number of Negroes, young, old & useless.”¹⁰⁰ The Brunswick Forge overseer James Gordon sent a similar inventory to Tayloe in 1822. He counted 51 slaves at Brunswick of whom 20 were “Hands employed in Iron making, besides the white hands.” As at Cloverdale, slave men held all of the central skilled positions at the forge such as hammerman, master and apprentice refiners, coal stockers, and colliers. The remaining slaves, including 17 children, worked as hostlers, gardeners, millers, farm hands, spinners, and cooks.¹⁰¹ The labor patterns that Tayloe and his overseers established at Cloverdale and Brunswick were comparable to those at other contemporary ironworks. David Ross employed 117 able-bodied male and female slaves in a variety of skilled occupations at his Oxford Ironworks, although he noted that he could muster as many as 150 to work. At Lucy Selina Furnace in Alleghany County, Ira Jordan employed 70 men to make 1,250 tons of pig iron.¹⁰²

⁹⁹James Gordon, Brunswick Forge, to Benjamin Ogle Tayloe, Washington City, February 4, 1822, TFP, 7: 1066-1099.

¹⁰⁰Negroes at Cloverdale, February 2, 1822, TFP, 7: 554; Slave Lists from Cloverdale, November 21, 1822, Beale Family Papers, VHS, Mss1B3658A12-13.

¹⁰¹A list of Negroes with their Occupation at Brunswick Forge, February 4, 1822, TFP, 7: 550.

¹⁰²Dew, “David Ross and the Oxford Iron Works,” 196; Lucy Selina Furnace Log, Tate Thompson Brady Papers.

At a minimum, almost half of the Cloverdale slaves were members of nuclear families. The appraisers listed thirteen slave families and noted both mother and father. In every case, at least one or both parents were skilled. Prince Big was a 32-year-old collier who had three children with Rose, age 35, a spinner. Bob Carter, age 51, worked in the house while his wife, 33-year-old Judy, worked as a spinner; they had four children. Fifty-year-old waggoner Bristoe had two children with spinner Doll, age 47; ore burner Matt (47) and cook and basketmaker Abba (40) had four children. Miner Morgan (45) and spinner Molly (40), with five children, had the largest family. Skilled workers and field hands also married. Night stockman Alek, age 27, had one child with Fanny, a 23-year-old field hand. Similarly, woodcutter Peter (21) and field hand Sally (18) had a one-month old baby named Susan in December of 1817.¹⁰³ The slaves at Cloverdale thus worked in a variety of demanding and sometimes dangerous jobs but had the comfort of a dynamic and extensive family network. The combination of independent skilled work and active family lives apparently made the routines at Cloverdale and Brunswick bearable—no records exist to indicate slave misbehavior or running away.¹⁰⁴

Production at Cloverdale and Brunswick harked back to the heyday of Neabsco and Occoquan. The 1820 industrial census indicated that at Cloverdale Tayloe annually produced 600 tons of pig iron and 30 tons of castings worth \$20,400 altogether. At Brunswick, Tayloe used 200 tons of pig iron to produce 145 tons of bar iron with a market value of \$17,500. A rough comparison with Lucy Selina's production record as of 1850 is informative as to Tayloe's potential profits. By 1850, Lucy Selina was no

¹⁰³List and Valuation of Cloverdale Furnace.

¹⁰⁴See Dew, "David Ross and the Oxford Iron Works," 210, for a discussion of David Ross's use of family arrangements as incentives and rewards.

longer as profitable as it had once been, and in fact it closed just two years later.

Ironmaster Ira Jordan's costs almost equaled what he made in sales from his pig iron and casting: about \$20,000.¹⁰⁵ However, whereas Jordan's costs were based on his making 1,250 tons of pig iron, Tayloe made only 600, meaning that his costs for iron ore and charcoal were roughly half of Jordan's. Thus, Tayloe's expenses at Cloverdale likely totaled around \$10,000. At Brunswick, Tayloe's costs amounted to about \$6,000. Altogether then, Tayloe likely made in the neighborhood of \$20,000 a year manufacturing pig and bar iron.¹⁰⁶

Tayloe established a contract with Richmond ironmasters John Clarke and William Wirt to sell his pig iron. John Clarke founded the Bellona Forge in Chesterfield County near Richmond in 1810 (see Appendix 2). Their arrangement ensured Tayloe a definite buyer for his pig iron and Clarke a steady supply of pig iron to make into bar iron—all at a reasonable, previously agreed-upon price. In January of 1817, overseer William Gordon reported to Tayloe that he had sold 200 tons to Clarke and Wirt at the rate of \$49 per ton.¹⁰⁷ In 1820, Tayloe was in the midst of renegotiating the contract with Clarke. He wrote, "As my Iron works will soon be in operation, my manager is desirous to know if we are likely to make a Contract for a farther quantity of Pig Iron so that he may regulate the Furnace accordingly." Tayloe requested \$50 per ton, but offered to compromise at \$49.50 since he knew Clarke paid his "Northern Customers" \$49. Clarke's response is unknown; later that year, however, Tayloe's son Benjamin made a

¹⁰⁵Lucy Selina Furnace Log.

¹⁰⁶Cloverdale #1 Furnace and Brunswick Forge Logs; see also William Gordon's estimation of shipping costs, which squares with my rough comparison, Gordon to Tayloe, February 4, 1822.

¹⁰⁷W. Gordon, Cloverdale, to Colo. John Tayloe, Washington City, January 28, 1817, Tayloe Family Papers, UVA, 38-630, Box 1, Folder 4.

new deal with Clarke for 300 tons at \$42 per ton.¹⁰⁸ By the end of the decade, Tayloe's relationship with Clarke had soured. Tayloe wrote Wirt, who had ended his partnership with Clarke in 1825, to complain about "the account so long outstanding for Iron furnished by me, to you and Mr. Clarke." He continued, "Mr. Clarke has disappointed me so often, even after repeated promises of payment, and [I am now] obliged to request your interposition." Clarke's inability to pay his debts to Tayloe was one of the major causes of Tayloe's own financial problems during the late 1820s. Whether Wirt complied in securing payments for Clarke as Tayloe desired is unknown.¹⁰⁹

James Gordon, Tayloe's manager at Brunswick, made arrangements to market any bar iron he could not otherwise sell; for example, he "[had] on hand thirty of forty Tons, that we cannot Sell at the Works" in 1822. He made several trips to Lynchburg during which he "took down with me, two Waggon loads, that I left with a Consign[ment] merchant." He felt confident in his ability to "land more" and keep up "with a good assortment of nice Iron." He reported to Tayloe that he "expect[ed] we shall sell a good deal there." Through the merchant, Tayloe sold his "surplus Bar Iron"—part of the 130-140 tons of bar iron Brunswick manufactured each year—for \$110 to \$130 per ton.¹¹⁰

Tayloe's ironworks figured prominently in his average annual income. Of the \$50,000 to \$75,000 he was thought to make each year, at least \$20,000 came from his ironmaking activities in Botetourt County. Tayloe instructed in his will for his sons to

¹⁰⁸ John Tayloe, Washington, to John Clarke & Co., May 4, 1820; Benjamin Ogle Tayloe, Washington, to John Clarke & Co., October 16, October 25, 1820, John Tayloe Letterbook (C1).

¹⁰⁹ John Tayloe at Washington, to William Wirt, Attorney General, January 31, 1827, John Tayloe Letterbook (C8).

¹¹⁰ Gordon to Tayloe, February 4, 1822.

share joint tenancy in Brunswick and Cloverdale.¹¹¹ By the late 1820s, however, Tayloe's sons had already developed an idea of what they wanted to do and be. The eldest son, John Tayloe IV, died in 1824 leaving a widow named Maria whom all the remaining Tayloe men assisted in supporting. Benjamin Ogle Tayloe, the next eldest, while he inherited a number of Virginia and Maryland plantations, enjoyed city life and established himself as a Washington businessman and socialite until his death in 1868. Tayloe recognized his son's love for Washington when he "expended much money in building him a house" on Lafayette Square across from the White House.¹¹² William Henry Tayloe preferred to take over the family business at Mt. Airy, and inherited most of the Mt. Airy Department after the death of his eldest brother. Edward Thornton Tayloe, a military man and world traveler, spent much of his life in public service and as the master of the Hopyard and Deogg plantations. Tayloe divided the rest of his numerous plantations between his remaining three sons. However, George Plater Tayloe, the next eldest after Edward, "expressed his will to take my Cloverdale Estate with the Furnace & the Madison track, & the stock Slaves Utensils Etc. upon those Estates instead of the former devise." Tayloe was "Willing on [his] part to gratify his wish," but required George to pay his brothers the difference between the value of his original bequest and the much more valuable ironworks estate.¹¹³

¹¹¹John Tayloe III Will.

¹¹²*Ibid*; Benjamin Ogle Tayloe, Our Neighbors on Lafayette Square, (Washington, DC, 1872).

¹¹³John Tayloe III Will. Tayloe's feelings were apparently hurt when, after first drafting his will in 1824, his sons began bargaining with one another over what they wanted versus what Tayloe intended to leave them. Benjamin wrote William, "As to Mount Airy Father resolves to have nothing to do with it—unless Compelled to do so—by its rejection by all his sons." Benjamin Ogle Tayloe, Washington, to William Henry Tayloe, TFP, 8: 22. His sons came to an amicable agreement, including that George should receive Cloverdale and Brunswick, which Tayloe later reflected in a codicil to his will.

Between his city businesses and new western ironworks, Tayloe was fully engaged in the business of the new nation. In the face of a whole host of new economic and social realities, Tayloe transformed himself from a planter-businessman to a businessman specializing in the iron industry and a variety of urban financial and speculative businesses. He estimated that his Washington properties and businesses were worth a combined value of over \$150,000, while his Mt. Airy Department plantations were worth at least \$300,000—and these values did not include Tayloe’s other agricultural plantations in Virginia and Maryland such as Neabsco, Deep Hole, and Nanjemoy.¹¹⁴ Tayloe’s consistent willingness to expand, diversify, and adjust his commercial activities revealed a versatility and entrepreneurialism comparable to those of any Northern businessman of the period.¹¹⁵

Tayloe’s increasing concentration on his various urban and industrial businesses demonstrated his adaptability in the face of new economic realities and ultimately made him one of the wealthiest men in Virginia. However, Tayloe’s entrepreneurialism had mixed results for his large population of enslaved African Americans. During the Tayloe family’s fifteen years of seasonal moving between rural Virginia and Washington City, their slaves were part-time members of African-American communities in two very distinct worlds. While the Tayloes celebrated the “bustle of politics, pleasure & fashion” available in Washington, they apparently never considered the impact of the seasonal

¹¹⁴Value of Property at a law estimate, Tayloe Family Papers, VHS, Mss1T2118C3, 46; 1816 Slave inventories, TFP, 6: 360 (other valuations are available throughout the inventories and record a similar value).

¹¹⁵See Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise*, 285-287, for his characterization of the Philadelphia merchant community.

moving and new living arrangements on their slaves.¹¹⁶ John Tayloe was a man who ordered in his will that five slave children living in Maryland be returned to their Virginia families as a condition of inheritance due to his “aversion to separate familys [sic] of slaves.”¹¹⁷ He was simultaneously a man who saw no contradiction in the seasonal moving of slaves away from their families, including slave children, over a twenty-to-thirty-year period. Once the Tayloes moved permanently to Washington around 1817, their slaves’ opportunities for an urban life and stable ties with other urban African Americans undoubtedly began to increase. However, at that point the Octagon was still considered to be out in the country and Washington City was still year away from living up to its name.

Likewise, Tayloe’s investments in the western iron industry involved both positives and negatives for his slaves. Certainly many slaves’ initial reaction was one of fear, anger and sadness, as Tayloe sent between 30 and 40 slaves from the Mt. Airy Department to distant Botetourt County the year he bought the works. While he may have preferred not to separate slave families if he thought it avoidable, Tayloe by no means let such concerns interfere with business. In fact, he had made it a regular part of his management at Mt. Airy to move slaves about the plantations as necessary. Thus, his actions in separating slave families in communities in both the Washington and Botetourt County situations represent a continuity in his management, not a departure. On the other hand, once at the western works, slaves were well treated, respected for their skills and

¹¹⁶Benjamin Ogle Tayloe, Washington, to Robert W. Carter, Richmond, Virginia, January 4, 1822, Carter Family Papers, Folder 21, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary. The Tayloes were virtually silent regarding slave life in the city, in stark contrast to their regular and numerous reflections on all aspects of slavery on their plantations.

¹¹⁷John Tayloe III Will.

expertise, rewarded for good work, and permitted without interference to form families and communities. Thus, Tayloe's entrepreneurialism created constant tension over separation for his slave communities, but rewarded the significant number of highly skilled individuals he depended upon to start and maintain his new business ventures.

CHAPTER VI

ADVENTURERS AND UNDERTAKERS: THE BUSINESS ENTERPRISE OF EARLY VIRGINIA'S PLANTER CLASS

While the specifics of their entrepreneurial activities were sometimes unique, the Tayloes' general approach to estate building, agricultural diversification, and business development was representative of the approaches, behaviors, and beliefs of other members of the planter class. Virginia's planter-businessmen initially turned to diversification and entrepreneurialism to provide a hedge against the fluctuations of the tobacco market during the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Planters who formerly had focused all their attention on tobacco looked to new opportunities presented by grain cultivation and the burgeoning iron industry. By mid-century, already diversifying planters recognized that their new agricultural and business endeavors offered them profitable ways to employ their slaves as well as additional sources of regular income. Planter-businessmen commonly operated multiple plantation craft shops worked largely by skilled slave labor, owned and speculated in land or industry-promoting companies, and earned a supplementary income by charging their neighbors tolls to grind their corn and grain. By the post-revolutionary period, most men of sufficient means moved to diversify their holdings and interests as a matter of expediency in the face of a declining tobacco culture. Planters typically devoted large parts of their acreage to a variety of

grains, especially wheat, and began to look at new urban and industrial opportunities as means to further their family fortunes.

John Tayloe II was a model early planter-businessmen. The three generations of the Tayloe family examined here all evinced a diversified and entrepreneurial approach to plantation management and financial security. Moreover, the second Tayloe and his peers provide clear evidence that this behavior was indeed representative of the activities of Virginia's elite planter-businessmen. In 1954, Jackson Turner Main produced a list of the 100 wealthiest Virginia planters of the revolutionary era based on their holdings in land and slaves.¹ Not surprisingly, most of Virginia's first families and political leaders appeared on the list, including the Carters, Harrisons, Fitzhughs, Lees, Pages, and Randolphs (see Appendix 3). Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington held places on the list as well. This impressive group, of which Tayloe was a member, acted as businessmen and entrepreneurs as well as large-scale agricultural planters.

Main based his list of the 100 on tax and census records from the 1770s and 1780s. Therefore, he necessarily identified the basis of planter wealth as being those things recorded by tax lists (land) and census records (slaves). These sources record little about planters' other business activities besides agriculture. However, other types of primary sources provide a more detailed glimpse into planters' business activities; wills and estate inventories are especially important. When wills and inventories were not readily identifiable for a particular member of the list, family manuscript collections that included correspondence and account books offered depth. I was able to find some

¹Jackson Turner Main, "The One Hundred," William and Mary Quarterly [hereafter WMQ] 3d ser., 11 (1954), 354-384.

TABLE 9
THE ONE HUNDRED

Richard Adams	Robert Carter	Carter B. Harrison	Edmund Pendleton
William Alexander	Robert W. Carter	Nathaniel Harrison	John Perrin
William Allen	Archibald Cary	James Henry	Edmund Randolph
John Ambler	W. Miles Cary	Patrick Henry	Peyton Randolph
John Armistead	William Churchill	Adam Hunter	Thomas Randolph
Roger Atkinson	Allen Cocke	Thomas Jefferson	Thomas M. Randolph
Henry Banks	Chastain Cocke	Joseph Jones	William Randolph
Burwell Bassett	John Cocke	Peter Jones	Thomas Roane
John Baylor	John H. Cocke	Robert Lawson	William Ronald
Edmund Berkeley	Francis Corbin	Henry Lee	David Ross
Robert Beverley	Gawin Corbin	Richard Lee	Edmund Ruffin
Theoderick Bland	Richard Corbin	William Lee	Henry Skipwith
William Blunt	John P. Custis	Warner Lewis	Peyton Skipwith
Carter Braxton	Nicholas Davis	William Lightfoot	Alexander Spotswood
William Brent	Francis Eppes	George Mason	James Southall
Cuthbert Bullitt	Francis Eppes	Stevens Mason	John Tabb
Lewis Burwell	Moore Fauntleroy	Joseph Mayo	Richard Taliaferro
Nathaniel Burwell	George Fairfax	Daniel McCarty	John Tayloe
Joseph Cabell	Henry Fitzhugh	Thomas Nelson	John Taylor
William Cabell	Thomas Fitzhugh	Thomas Nelson	Alexander Trent
Charles Carter	William Fitzhugh	Wilson Nicholas	George Turberville
Edward Carter	William Fitzhugh	John Page	John Turberville
George Carter	Muscoe Garnett	Mann Page	Robert P. Waring
John Carter	Philip Grymes	John Paradise	George Washington
Landon Carter	Benjamin Harrison	David Patterson	Ralph Wormeley

combination of these source materials for 65 of the 100--this group will thus serve as the class with whom I will compare John Tayloe II. Of the 65 on whom I found information, 89%, or 58 out of 65, owned, operated, or invested in some form of business in addition to the cultivation of tobacco (see Tables 9, 10 and Appendix 4).

It is important to note that there are some complications with any statistical analysis using Main's list of the 100. First, as Main himself cautioned, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate in the records between two men who had the same name, as was common in early Virginia. In some cases those men were contemporaries, while in others they represented different generations of the same family. It is therefore likely that in some cases, tracts of land, slaves, or entrepreneurial activities were attributed to the wrong person. Two Robert Carters, two Francis Eppeses, two William Fitzhughs, two Thomas Nelsons, and two Thomas Randolphs each made the list of the 100. One Richard Lee from Westmoreland County made the list, yet, two Richard Lees, Richard H. Lee (Chantilly Plantation, 1732-1794) and Richard B. Lee (Lee Hall Plantation, 1726-1785), lived in Westmoreland at the same time and were wealthy planters. John Tayloe himself presents a similar problem. The second John Tayloe died in 1779. His son, John Tayloe III, was born in 1771 and took over the Tayloe estate in 1791 after eleven years of living and studying in England. The tax and census information from which Main drew his evidence is largely from the 1780s, when neither Tayloe was managing the family estate. However, because John Tayloe II was the most responsible for the estate as it existed during the 1780s, I consider him, and not John Tayloe III, to be the Tayloe included on the list of the 100.

A second problem arises from Main's having used the tax and census records to calculate the planters' total amounts of land and slaves owned. Through a variety of means, planters often found ways around paying taxes on all the lands they owned. Sometimes an overseer's, tenant's, or son's name appeared as the taxpayer, and by implication, owner, of a particular tract of land. Planters sometimes leased lands and required their tenants to pay the quitrents or taxes as part of their rent. In calculating one person's total acreage across a number of counties, in many cases the number Main figured is lower than the planter's actual holdings and he therefore underrepresented some planters' wealth. The additional manuscript evidence I found, such as wills and inventories, confirmed that fact. Therefore, the numbers I will use to discuss total numbers of slaves or acreage of land owned will be these "manuscript totals," or the combination of Main's figures with the additional information I found in other sources.

My analysis of the 100 indicates that planters' business activities define the early planter class as entrepreneurial in character and in deed. In other words, planters made business decisions prudently, willingly endured reasonable risks, and demonstrated business intelligence in gathering information before making financial decisions. They also diligently and closely managed their often sizable and diverse economic activities, embarked on new endeavors when the old ones became less profitable, supervised large numbers of slave workers, and effectively advanced their business interests in the political arena--all with the intention of producing surpluses for markets and profits for themselves. These activities defined planter class identity in early Virginia, even within a traditional agricultural economy, and allow historians correctly to characterize southern

planters as entrepreneurial during this era.² Some planter-businessmen were better businessmen than others; some planter-businessmen's enterprises produced little profit and occasionally failed altogether; and still other planters maintained their agricultural focus and rarely invested in other arenas. These facts do not diminish the entrepreneurialism exhibited by the class as a whole. In the language of the day, planter-businessmen were "adventurers and undertakers," men of action and innovation who invested, diversified, and speculated in such a way as to maintain their--and Virginia's--long-term economic growth.³

²Joyce E. Chaplin, An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815 (Chapel Hill, 1993), Edwin Perkins, "The Entrepreneurial Spirit in Colonial America: The Foundations of Modern Business History," Business History Review 63 (1) (Spring 1989), 169-170, 176; David Curtis Skaggs, "John Semple and the Development of the Potomac River Valley, 1750-1773," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography [hereafter VMHB] 92 (3) (1984), 307-308; Robert Gallman, "Slavery and Southern Economic Growth," Southern Economic Journal XLV (1979), 1018; Gerald W. Mullin, Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia (London, 1972), 8; Jay R. Mandle, "The Plantation Economy: An Essay in Definition," Science and Society 36 (Spring 1972), 59-61; Aubrey C. Land, Bases of the Plantation Society (Columbia, S.C., 1969), 10, 99, 101; 10-11; Rudolf Braun, "The Rise of a Rural Class of Entrepreneurs," Journal of World History 10 (1967), 554, 557. The work of several historians demonstrates that northern and southern entrepreneurs in colonial America were more similar than not. See, Charles Grant, Democracy in the Connecticut Frontier Town of Kent (New York, 1961), 40-44; James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-Industrial America," WMQ 3d ser., 35 (1978), 18. Historians have argued over the nature of the southern planter class for decades. Those who argue that southern planters were not entrepreneurial variously base that characterization on the lack of a traditional merchant class (Siener), the existence of slavery (Genovese and Fox-Genovese), the profitability of commercial agriculture (Doerflinger), or the lack of basic entrepreneurial talent (McCusker and Menard). William H. Siener, "Economic Development in Revolutionary Virginia: Fredericksburg, 1750-1810," unpublished dissertation, The College of William and Mary, 1982; Eugene Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "The Slave Economies in Political Perspective," Journal of American History LXVI (1979), 15, 22; Thomas M. Doerflinger, A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia (Chapel Hill, 1986), 346-347, 355; John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, The Economy of British America, 1607-1789 (Chapel Hill, 1985), 97.

³For example, a 1727 statute providing for the founding of ironworks was entitled, "An Act for Encouraging Adventurers in Iron-Works," William Waller Hening, ed., The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619 (Charlottesville, Va., 1969), 4: 228. Similarly, Robert Carter declined an invitation from John Tayloe I "to be a joynt Undertaker with your new Society untill I am better acquainted with [your] progress." Robert Carter to Colo. John Tayloe, January 29, 1728/9, Robert Carter Letterbook, 1728-1730, Virginia Historical Society [hereafter VHS].

A brief analysis of several planter-businessmen's activities will help to illuminate the extent and scale of their entrepreneurialism. Roger Atkinson (1725-1784) was a merchant-planter in Richmond and Petersburg. While Atkinson owned 40,000 acres and 100 slaves in a half-dozen counties, his merchant activities were his top priority and main source of income. Atkinson established general stores in the cities of Richmond and Petersburg and had trading connections with almost a dozen English mercantile firms. He supported the development of smaller towns in Virginia such as Pocahontas and Appomattox and founded flour mills to support the processing of wheat and other grains. Atkinson believed strongly in agricultural diversification and was convinced that Virginia's economic future rested on planters' ability and desire to diversify from tobacco. He invested in smaller enterprises, including several winemaking schemes, and speculated in land in the neighboring colony of North Carolina.⁴ Atkinson's career highlights the possibility that, while most often entrepreneurialism involved planters branching out into business, it also could include businessmen branching out into planting.

Edmund Pendleton (1721-1803) farmed on a smaller scale; he owned 7,283 acres located mostly in Caroline County as well as 51 slaves. Pendleton thus ranked among the third quarter of the 100 in terms of wealth, making it likely that the success of his various investments and speculations were all the more important to his financial security. Pendleton, also a lawyer, speculated in land and ginseng, and opened an ordinary. His land speculation proved the most troublesome, as land in which he invested became

⁴William B. Bynum, "Roger Atkinson: Merchant-Planter in Revolutionary Virginia," unpublished master's thesis, University of Virginia, 1981, 1, 4, 10, 17, 25.

TABLE 10

**THE TWENTY WEALTHIEST PLANTER-BUSINESSMEN OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY ERA, RANKED BY HOLDINGS IN LAND AND SLAVES^a**

<i>Top Twenty By Holdings in Land (acres):</i>	<i>Top Twenty By Holdings in Slaves:</i>
1. David Ross, Fluvanna, 101,430	1. Charles Carter, Charles City, 785
2. Henry Banks, Richmond City, 82,591	2. William Allen, Surry, 700
3. George Fairfax, Fairfax, 75,000	3. Robert Beverley, Essex, 592
4. James Henry, King and Queen, 66,750	4. John Tayloe, Richmond, 500
5. Robert Carter, Westmoreland, 60,635.5	5. David Ross, Fluvanna, 448
6. Robert Beverley, Essex, 48, 988	6. Robert Carter, Westmoreland, 445
7. Alexander Spotswood, Spotsylvania, 47,262	7. William Fitzhugh, Stafford, 394
8. Charles Carter, Charles City, 44,468	8. George Washington, Fairfax, 390
9. David Patterson, Buckingham, 43,477	9. Thomas Nelson, Yorktown, 384
10. Roger Atkinson, Petersburg, 41,079	10. John Tabb, Amelia, 375
11. John Tayloe, Richmond, 35,000	11. Thomas M. Randolph, Goochland, 370
12. Carter Braxton, King William, 33,000	12. Peyton Randolph, Powhatan, 361
13. Nicholas Davis, Bedford, 27,747	13. Landon Carter, Richmond, 326
14. Cuthbert Bullitt, Prince William, 27,716	14. Ralph Wormeley, Middlesex, 325
15. William Allen, Surry, 22,846	15. Benjamin Harrison, Charles City, 304
16. John Tabb, Amelia, 22,421	16. Edward Carter, Albemarle, 297
17. Patrick Henry, Henrico, 22,190.5	17. W. Miles Cary, Elizabeth City, 294
18. William Fitzhugh, Stafford, 21,521.5	18. Richard Corbin, Middlesex, 264
19. Landon Carter, Richmond, 21,316	19. Edmund Berkeley, Middlesex, 242
20. Benjamin Harrison, Charles City, 21,266	20. Philip Grymes, Middlesex, 241

^aBased on "Manuscript Totals."

TABLE 11
DISTRIBUTION OF LAND AND SLAVES AMONG THE 100
DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA^a

	<i>Land</i>		<i>Slaves</i>	
	<i>Range</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>#</i>
# owning:	50,000 + acres	5	500 + slaves	4
	30,000-49,999	7	250-499	14
	20,000-29,999	7	200-249	12
	15,000-19,999	9	100-199	38
	10,000-14,999	18	50-99	25
	5,000-9,999	39	25-49	3
	less than 4,999	12	less than 24	2

^aBased on "Manuscript Totals."

tangled in boundary disputes between Virginia and North Carolina. He petitioned on behalf of internal improvements and supported the creation of new towns in the interior. In addition, he operated at least one mill, New Gate, to process the grains he cultivated.⁵

Archibald Cary (1721-1787) of Amptill in Chesterfield County owned over 17,000 acres and 240 slaves. While agriculture served as Cary's main source of income, he also dedicated himself to developing industry. Cary greatly expanded several enterprises he had inherited from his father, established a furnace and foundry on Falling Creek in Chesterfield, and founded flour mills in Warwick. He also supported the development of the limonite iron ore mining industry in Buckingham County. In addition, Cary established and operated a ropery in the city of Richmond. Like a number of his contemporaries, Cary invested in a company encouraging the development of the wine, olive oil, and silk industries in Virginia.⁶

David Ross (1740-c. 1817), one of Virginia's leading iron masters, owned over 100,000 acres and almost 450 slaves. Ross's business activities were numerous: he was a merchant, a shipowner, and a director of the James River Company; he operated several mills on his estate; and he owned a number of coal mines. He speculated extensively in land as far south as Georgia and Mississippi. While Ross profited from all of these activities, none of them compared to his earnings from his various ironworks. David Ross is best known for his association with the Oxford Ironworks in Campbell County,

⁵David John Mays, ed., The Letters and Papers of Edmund Pendleton, 1734-1803 (Charlottesville, 1967) [hereafter Pendleton Papers], 7, 78, 91, 361, 589.

⁶Robert K. Brock, Archibald Cary of Amptill, Wheelhorse of the Revolution (Richmond, 1937), 12; Proposals for forming a Company or Partnership for the Purpose of raising and making Wine, Oil, agruminous Plants, and Silk," Mss1Ad198a207Os, and "Outlines of a Plan for introducing into the Colonies . . . the different Products of Europe," Mss1Ad198a206, Adams Family Papers, VHS.

which manufactured 1,600 tons of pig iron annually. However, Ross also invested in or owned Calloway's Furnace in Campbell County, Stonewall Furnace in Appomattox, and David Ross Forge and Furnace in Tennessee. For Ross, agricultural activities served to support his other business activities, especially ironmaking.⁷

Robert Carter (1728-1804) of Nomini Hall in Westmoreland County was one of the most committed and successful planter-businessmen. Carter owned over 60,000 acres and almost 450 slaves in at least nine Virginia counties. He owned, operated, and sometimes rented out numerous grist, saw, and merchant mills. He owned several schooners, a productive salt mine, and a one-quarter interest in the Frying Pan copper mines.⁸ On his plantations, Carter established blacksmithing shops and a "Manufactory of Woolen, Cotton & Linen Clothes." Carter profited greatly from his sales of textiles during the Revolutionary War, and explained to his Baltimore business associates that if he should have more money to invest, "it should be employed in a Linnen and Woolen Manufactory."⁹ Like Ross, Carter was also an iron master. Carter owned a one-fifth interest in the Baltimore Iron Works, a prominent and successful Maryland company which operated between the 1730s and the 1770s.¹⁰ His share in the company's works and mines was valued at approximately £10,000 and netted him a minimum annual income of £500. In 1787, Carter sold his share of the works to Abraham van Bebbber for

⁷Charles B. Dew, "David Ross and the Oxford Iron Works: A Study of Industrial Slavery in the Early Nineteenth-Century South," WMQ 3d ser., 31 (April 1974).

⁸Louis Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall: A Virginia Planter of the Eighteenth Century (Charlottesville, 1965), 19, 149-150, 179-181, 183, 184, 198-199.

⁹Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 96, 175-177.

¹⁰Keach Johnson, "Genesis of the Baltimore Company," Journal of Southern History 19 (May 1953), 157-179.

£20,000.¹¹ Most significantly, Carter derived more income from rents than from any of his other enterprises, agriculture included. Carter appointed an agent in each of the seven counties in which he had tenants to handle rental matters on his behalf. He rented lands to several hundred tenants and netted 35,000 pounds of tobacco annually worth over £2000 Virginia currency. Finally, Carter best demonstrated his flexibility, tolerance for risk, and liberal leanings when he freed his slaves at the end of his life. It was the largest private manumission in Virginia's history.¹²

As these men demonstrate, planter-businessmen invested in the full spectrum of business opportunities. Some of their investments were related to their agricultural endeavors, while others assisted those endeavors without being related directly. Mills, wineries, fisheries, and tobacco warehouses were among the agricultural or agricultural processing businesses in which planters invested. On the other hand, merchant activities, ironworks, clothmaking, shipbuilding, and land speculation were enterprises that in various ways assisted planters' agricultural endeavors without being related directly to agriculture. Tobacco marketing laid the foundation for merchant activities, while ironworks produced iron tools necessary for agricultural cultivation as well as pig iron used for ballast in ships hauling tobacco. Furthermore, the locus of planter-businessmen's enterprises was generally in rural Virginia. Few large towns existed in eighteenth-century Virginia. Therefore, the many "urban" services that were provided in the northern colonies' cities and towns were available for Virginia's population in the

¹¹Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 39, 166; 1787 deed, Carter Family Papers, Mss1C2468a2057, VHS.

¹²Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 72-78.

rural centers, namely plantations.¹³ From their plantations, planter-businessmen offered a variety of agricultural processing, craft, merchant, and light industrial services. In some cases, planters established separate industrial plantations for their ironworks or mines. Like northern craft shops, particular plantations gained reputations for being reputable and dependable businesses with skilled workers (usually slaves) who provided high-quality products or services. Those plantations thereafter dominated the regional or county market in that particular trade. However, while planters' enterprises were overwhelmingly rural in location, these men repeatedly demonstrated interest in town development and speculation in town lots.

Of all industries and businesses in which planters engaged, milling was the most common. At least 45% (29/65) of planters built, owned, and operated at least one and often multiple grist, saw, and merchant mills.¹⁴ Roger Atkinson of Petersburg built a flour mill in the 1750s or 1760s and believed planters should diversify their agricultural cultivation. Henry Banks and David Ross each had mills on the falls of the James River in Richmond. John Baylor's mill, operated by a slave miller, sat on the north side of the Mattaponi River in Caroline County. Carter Braxton had numerous grist mills and

¹³Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman, "Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South," Perspectives in American History 10 (1976), 13.

¹⁴The percentages and ratios assigned to each business category (i.e. milling, 45% or 29/65) are assumed to be the minimum number of planters who participated in each type of business. For more on mills and milling, see Thomas Berry, "The Rise of Flour Milling in Richmond," VMHB 18 (October 1970), 387-408; John F. Hart, "The Maryland Mill Act, 1669-1766: Economic Policy and the Confiscatory Redistribution of Private Property," American Journal of Legal History 39 (January 1995), 1-24; David Klingaman, "The Significance of Grain in the Development of the Tobacco Colonies," Journal of Economic History 29 (1969), 268-278; David Plater, "Building the North Wales Mill of William Allason," VMHB 85 (1977), 45-50; Mary A. Stephenson, "Mills in Eighteenth Century Virginia," Research Report Series (Williamsburg, Va., 1947); The Miller in Eighteenth-Century Virginia, Williamsburg Craft Series (Williamsburg, Va., 1990).

bakeries on his plantations, one of which made “about 100 Barel Flour a Week,” while Nathaniel Burwell operated several merchant mills on his Frederick County estate.¹⁵ The patriarchs of the Carter family (Charles, Edward, Landon, and Robert) operated at least a dozen mills between them. Landon Carter’s Richmond County bolting mill sifted at least 100 bushels of flour per month and brought him “6 d. [pence] the bushel clear of toll.” Robert Carter of Nomini Hall in Westmoreland County owned at least one merchant mill with bake ovens and one grist mill. Carter hoped the merchant mill would manufacture 30,000 bushels of wheat per year, and he required his numerous tenants to grind their crops at his mills as part of their leases.¹⁶

Archibald Cary founded flour mills in Chesterfield County as early as the 1730s, while Benjamin Harrison employed slave millers at his mills near Richmond City by the middle of the century. Peyton Skipwith employed slave millers at the four mills on his Mecklenburg County plantation called Prestwould. In 1742 George Turberville left his son George two mills in Westmoreland County staffed by a combination of enslaved and indentured workers. George Washington, Landon Carter, and John Paradise each

¹⁵Bynum, “Roger Atkinson,” 17; Letters and Indentures, June 5, 1797, Henry Banks Papers, VHS, Mss1B2264a904-910; John Baylor Will, May 16, 1772, Virginia Will Records: From the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, the William and Mary Quarterly, and Tyler’s Quarterly (Baltimore, 1993), 666; Alonzo T. Dill, Carter Braxton, Virginia Signer: Conservative in Revolt (Lanham, Md., 1983), 23; Mary A. Stephenson, “Mills in Eighteenth Century Virginia,” 16; Lorena S. Walsh, “A ‘Place in Time’ Regained: A Fuller History of Colonial Chesapeake Slavery Through Group Biography,” in Larry E. Hudson, ed., Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South (Rochester, 1994), 24.

¹⁶Charles Carter Will, May 10, 1803, Mss2C24534a1, VHS; Will of Edward Carter of Blenheim, February 21, 1792, University of Virginia [hereafter UVA]; Jack P. Greene, ed., The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778 (Charlottesville, 1965) [hereafter Carter Diary], 2: 1066; H.D. Farish, ed., Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion (Williamsburg, 1945) [hereafter Fithian’s Journal], 63, 68, 75, 81, 191; Proposals by Robert Carter, 1770-1789, Carter Family Papers, Mss1C2468a2108-2113, Section 37, VHS; Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 149-150, 179-181.

operated mills in York County even though none of them resided there.¹⁷ Washington also operated at least two other mills on his Fairfax County estate, and even built a mill on Pennsylvania lands he acquired in 1775. Like other planters, Washington employed slave millers to produce his “best Superfine Flour.”¹⁸

Land speculation was another entrepreneurial activity that drew planter-businessmen’s investments. Either individually or through a variety of Virginia land speculation companies, planters speculated in large rural tracts in both the Tidewater and backcountry regions as well as in town lots in the numerous proposed towns, which rarely came to fruition. These purchases were speculative in that they exceeded a planter’s immediate agricultural or business needs. Planters usually resold their speculations for a profit, used them to settle debts, or, most frequently, rented them to tenants who were required to clear and improve the tracts as part of their lease agreements. Planters likely viewed tenancy as banking assets to be passed to children at marriage or by will.¹⁹ At least 15% (10/65) of planter-businessmen purchased shares in large land speculation companies. Robert Carter, Gawin Corbin, Richard Lee, George Mason, and

¹⁷Brock, Archibald Cary of Amptill, 11; Pauline Pearce Warner, Benjamin Harrison of Berkeley. Walter Cocke of Surry. Family Records I (Tappahannock, Va., 1962), 26, 33; Benjamin Harrison Will, January 3, 1780, Mss2H2452a2, VHS; 1798 Plat of Prestwould Plantation, Skipwith Papers, Swem Library, College of William and Mary [hereafter Swem]; Peyton Skipwith Will and Inventory, December 21, 1805, Box XXIV, Folder 3, Skipwith Papers, Swem; see also, Box I, Folders 11, 14, 18, 81, 82, 88, 92, Skipwith Papers, Swem; Inventory of Major George Turberville, April 1742, Room by Room Inventories, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (hereafter CWF); Stephenson, “Mills in Eighteenth Century Virginia,” 8-10.

¹⁸John C. Fitzpatrick, The Diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799 (New York, 1925) [hereafter Washington’s Diaries], 1: 357, 408n2; 2: 21; 3: 15-22; 4: 309n2; George Washington, Mt. Vernon, to Thomas Newton, Jr., merchant in Norfolk, December 14, 1773, in Ulrich B. Phillips, ed., Plantation and Frontier Documents, 1649-1863, Illustrative of Industrial History in the Colonial and Antebellum South (Cleveland, 1909), 191.

¹⁹Lucy Simler, “Tenancy in Colonial Pennsylvania: The Case of Chester County,” WMQ 3d ser., 43 (1986), 557, 561-562.

John Tayloe were all shareholders in the renowned Ohio Company. That company formed in 1751 for the purpose of “taking up and settling a Tract of Territory of Land of about Five Hundred Thousand Acres on the Branches of the Ohio and other Branches of the River Mississippi.” Altogether, the company received grants totaling over one and a half million acres. The shareholders made money by settling tenant families, operating forts and storehouses, and participating in the Indian trade.²⁰ Most of these same planters also invested in the Mississippi Company, a related enterprise organized in 1747 to purchase and settle 5,000 acres on the Mississippi River.²¹

George Washington founded a number of land speculation and internal improvement companies. Beginning in the 1760s, Washington gathered a number of investors, including Burwell Bassett, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Nelson, to fund a project to drain the Dismal Swamp situated on Virginia’s southern border with North Carolina. Once the area was drained, Washington thought, a canal could be dug to connect the two colonies, while the rest of the reclaimed swampland would prove to be rich farm land. Washington’s personal investment ultimately totaled over \$20,000, and the company owned as much as 40,000 acres of land. Efforts ultimately focused on building a canal, which finally was completed during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.²² In addition, Washington, David Ross, and other entrepreneurs founded the

²⁰Ohio Company Articles of Agreement, Acc. 24662, Library of Virginia [hereafter LVA]; Alfred P. James, The Ohio Company (Pittsburgh, 1959); Pamela C. Copeland, Five George Masons: Patriots and Planters of Virginia and Maryland (Charlottesville, 1975).

²¹Mississippi Company Articles of Agreement and Copartnership, LVA.

²²Washington’s Diaries, 1:189n4; Dismal Swamp Company and Dismal Swamp Canal Company Records, Acc. 22867, LVA; Charles T. Cullen, ed., The Papers of Thomas Jefferson (Princeton, 1950-1995) [hereafter Jefferson Papers], 7: 642.

James River Canal Company during the 1780s to build a seven-mile long canal around Richmond's falls, opening the James River to Virginia's backcountry. Washington and Jefferson invested in similar projects on the Potomac River around the new City of Washington.²³

Numerous individuals speculated in land as well. Twenty-six per cent (17/65) of planter-businessmen regularly purchased large tracts of lands as a means of increasing their income. Roger Atkinson owned acreage in North Carolina and Mann Page speculated in land in even more distant Tennessee. Henry Banks owned 77,000 acres in Kentucky as well as numerous lots in Richmond City. Robert Carter owned over 60,000 acres across nine Virginia counties from which he received regular and significant rental income.²⁴ Richard Corbin patented 20,000 acres on the Mississippi River in 1754, while George Fairfax owned over 75,000 acres which he rented to numerous tenants.²⁵ Patrick Henry speculated in thousands of acres in Kentucky, as did George Mason, who also invested in tracts in western Maryland and Pennsylvania both individually and as a member of the Ohio Company.²⁶ David Ross, by far the greatest landowner of them all, owned over 101,000 acres in 13 Virginia counties. John Taylor and Edmund Pendleton, both noted Caroline County lawyers, speculated in land in North Carolina and Kentucky.

²³Mullin, Flight and Rebellion, 137-138; Washington's Diaries, 2: 183, 394, 415; Jefferson Papers, 10: 605, 15: 79.

²⁴Bynum, Roger Atkinson, 25; Henry Banks Papers, Mss1B2264a900-903, VHS; Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 72-78; Mann Page Will, October 13, 1803, Mss1P2775a29-30, VHS.

²⁵ "Genealogy of the Corbin Family," VMHB 30 (1922), 522; "Battaile Muse's Return of the Estate of the Honorable George William Fairfax, Decd.," October 21, 1788, VHS.

²⁶Patrick Henry Accounts, in Ledger, 1764, 1770-1775, 1778, 1780, 1783-1790, Acc. 22408b, LVA; Copeland, Five George Masons, 107.

Their North Carolina lands involved them in a lengthy legal battle over their title, as the acreage originally lay in Augusta County, Virginia, but was given to North Carolina after the colonies' boundary was redrawn.²⁷ Finally, George Washington, besides speculating and investing in Virginia lands and projects, owned thousands of acres of land in Pennsylvania and Georgia.²⁸ This list of speculators is incomplete. Judge James Henry of King and Queen County owned 66,650 acres, including over 52,000 in Pittsylvania County—well beyond any amount he himself could have cultivated. Similarly, Robert Beverley, Alexander Spotswood, and David Patterson, other planter-businessmen for whom tax rolls are the only available evidence, each owned more than 40,000 acres. The same is true for Carter Braxton, Nicholas Davis, Cuthbert Bullitt, William Allen, and John Tabb, who owned between 22,000 and 33,000 acres each. It is likely that all of these men invested and speculated in a similar manner to the other planter-businessmen whose enterprises are better recorded.

Town lots drew the speculative interest of planter-businessmen as well. At least 60% (39/65) of planters owned lots in Virginia's numerous proposed or existing towns during the eighteenth century. Altogether, this group owned a minimum total of 127 town lots. Williamsburg, Yorktown, Richmond City, Fredericksburg, Alexandria, Petersburg, and Tappahannock all attracted planters' interest, as did smaller villages that seemed to demonstrate commercial potential such as Dumfries, Occoquan, Leedstown, Port Royal, Pocahontas, Milford, and Richmond Courthouse. At least 14% (9/65) of the

²⁷Memorial of Edmund Pendleton and John Taylor to Virginia House of Delegates concerning Title to lands on Reedy Creek, June 1, 1781, in Pendleton Papers, 361; Will of John Taylor of Caroline, January 7, 1824, Fitzhugh Family Papers, Mss1F5785b41-43, Section 13, VHS.

²⁸1786 Plat, Acc. 23587a, LVA.

wealthiest planter-businessmen--and likely far more--served as trustees or financiers of new towns in Virginia.²⁹ Town trustees supervised the surveying and sale of lots, encouraged settlement, settled any initial disputes, and often owned or purchased lots in the town themselves. These activities demonstrate that planter-businessmen understood the potential of towns as centers of business and commerce, even if the prevailing settlement pattern, landscape, and county governmental structure worked against towns' success³⁰; many of these settlements remained villages, lasted only briefly, or never really materialized at all--despite planters' efforts.

Since at least one-quarter of all planter-businessmen speculated in land, it is hardly surprising that about one-quarter also served as landlords (23% or 15/65). Leasing lands to tenants under a variety of arrangements seems to have been planters' most common means of profiting from their speculative investments. While land speculation and leasing were standard activities among leading planters in America and England, they provided critical sources of investment income. Indeed, some planter-businessmen purchased real estate specifically for leasing. Henry Banks established tenements on five Richmond City lots for leasing during the 1790s. Henry Fitzhugh likewise rented James Anderson two lots he owned in Alexandria for \$85 per year with the option to buy them at the end of five years.³¹

²⁹Bynum, Roger Atkinson, 4; Prince William Places, 88; Pendleton Papers, 589.

³⁰For a good discussion of early southern urban development, see Earle and Hoffman, "Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South," 7-80.

³¹Survey Plats for Henry Banks, merchant of Richmond, by William Price, February 21, 1797, Henry Banks Papers, Mss1B2264a900-903; Will of Henry Fitzhugh, April 10, 1805, VHS. For more on land leasing and tenancy in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake, see Lorena S. Walsh, "Land, Landlord, and Leaseholder: Estate Management and Tenant Fortunes in Southern Maryland, 1640-1820," Agricultural History 59

Other planter-businessmen turned to the income that tenants could provide because they recognized that large parts of their plantation lands were underutilized. Carter Braxton leased much of his 25,000-acre Amherst County plantation named Braxton's Ridge for this reason. Similarly, Edward Carter rented some of his Albemarle County lands and received a regular rental income which he bequeathed to his son William. In 1767 George Washington offered for rent in York County two plantations which his wife had brought to his estate. Likewise, Washington leased lands in other distant counties, including Frederick and Fauquier. Washington employed a rental agent, Battaile Muse, to conduct business on his behalf with his numerous renters.³² John Paradise rented out many of his Virginia lands, but for different reasons. Paradise, who only briefly resided in Virginia, lived in London. He therefore rented most of the 5,700 acres he owned in addition to numerous Williamsburg town lots. He leased his Rich Neck Mill for £50 sterling per year and his Rich Neck Plantation for \$60 annually. John Faulem rented Paradise's New Quarter Plantation in Surry County for \$100 per year, while James Chaddish, William Hinly, and Benjamin Powell annually paid Paradise a combined total of more than \$100 for the properties they leased.³³

Several planters derived more income from rents than from any of their other enterprises, agriculture included. Robert Carter of Nomini Hall was such a planter. Carter appointed an agent in each county in which he had tenants to handle rental matters

(1985), 373-396; Gregory A. Stiverson, Poverty in a Land of Plenty: Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Maryland (Baltimore, 1977).

³²Dill, Carter Braxton, Virginia Signer, 5; Will of Edward Carter; Washington's Diaries, 1: 278, 2: 278, 280, 280n6, 429; Stephenson, "Mills in Eighteenth Century Virginia," 8-9.

³³Lucy Paradise Inventory, January 1812, Lee Family Papers, Mss1L51f204-205, VHS; Archibald Shepperson, John Paradise and Lucy Ludwell of London and Williamsburg (Richmond, 1942), 42-45, 274.

on his behalf. His agents collected rents, negotiated leases, addressed tenants' complaints, and annually advised Carter about the state of his rental agreements and the condition of his properties. Rent amounts depended on the size and condition of the leased tract, and ranged from £4 to £171 per year. Carter leased lands in Loudoun, Fairfax, Prince William, Northumberland, Westmoreland, Richmond, and Frederick Counties to several hundred tenants, netting him 35,000 pounds of tobacco annually, worth over £2000 Virginia currency.³⁴ George Fairfax was another planter able to live off his extensive rental income. Fairfax rented out lands in Berkeley, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, and Loudoun Counties, and in fact rented out the majority of the minimum 75,000 acres he owned. His Shannondale and Piedmont tracts in Loudoun and Berkeley Counties were the center of Fairfax's rental empire, totaling over 47,000 acres alone. Fairfax generally purchased such tracts for the purpose of subdividing them into lots, usually of 100 acres, for tenants. Battaile Muse, Fairfax's rental agent, arranged short-term leases lasting about three to five years at the rate of approximately £2 per year. Thus, Fairfax's rental income from these two tracts alone, if fully occupied, would have been about £940 Virginia currency annually.³⁵

Many planter-businessmen engaged in various types of merchant activities. At least 25% (16/65) of the major planters owned a tavern or store, provided merchant services from their home plantation, or were named partners in a mercantile firm. Henry Banks and David Ross were businessmen who operated their own mercantile companies.

³⁴Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 72-78.

³⁵ "Battaile Muse's Return of the Estate of . . . Fairfax"; Will of George William Fairfax, July 20, 1780, VHS.

Banks was a named partner in the Richmond firm of Banks, Hunter & Co., while Ross participated in at least three mercantile firms during his career: Ross & Forde, David Ross & Co., and Ross & Currie. Ross also operated stores in Richmond City and Fluvanna County.³⁶ Other planters provided commercial services on a smaller scale, usually through a general store, tavern, or ordinary which served a local community. Nathaniel Burwell established ordinaries on both his Carter's Grove and Carter Hall Plantations. Patrick Henry ran a small country store during the 1750s and 1760s before turning to study the law.

Edmund Pendleton chose not to operate his own ordinary, but instead invested in one managed by business associate Thomas Wild. In addition, Pendleton regularly sold goods he ordered from Liverpool to his neighbors, including cloth, hats, shoes, pewter, glass, paint, oil, and ceramics.³⁷ James Southall operated the Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg, while Roger Atkinson, Adam Hunter, Thomas Nelson, and Richard Adams provided merchant services in Petersburg, Fredericksburg, Yorktown, and Richmond respectively.³⁸ More common still were the host of merchant services many planters provided on a more informal basis at their plantations. Like Pendleton, many planters ordered a variety of British-made goods needed by their neighbors and sold or

³⁶John Ambler Papers, UVA, Mss 1140, Box 2; Emory Evans, Thomas Nelson of Yorktown: Revolutionary Virginian (Williamsburg, 1972), np; Dew, "David Ross and the Oxford Iron Works," 206n63.

³⁷William Kelso, Kingsmill Plantations, 1619-1800: Archaeology of Country Life in Colonial Virginia (San Diego, 1984), 98, 100; Ledger, 1758-1763, Acc. 20472, LVA; Pendleton Papers, 7, 78.

³⁸Bynum, "Roger Atkinson," 1; Merchant's Records, Acc. 3005, UVA; 1782 Richmond census; Thomas Nelson Letterbook, 1766-1775, Acc. 31178, LVA; Evans, Thomas Nelson of Yorktown, 22, 24, 25.

bartered them for a profit. Carter Braxton and William Ronald were other planter-businessmen who conducted their merchant activities in this manner.³⁹

A number of planter-businessmen preferred to invest in commercial ventures rather than directly operate a store or tavern. Thirty investment-minded planters, including 15 from the group of 100 (23% of the 65) formed the Wine, Silk, and Oil Company. In 1774, these planters desired to “introduc[e] into the Colonies of Great Britain on North America the different Products of Europe, which may be cultivated under the similar Circumstances of Climate Situation Soil &c.” Working with Philip Mazzei, an Italian businessman with ties to Virginia, the company intended to purchase lands in the backcountry, find settlers experienced in cultivating wine, silk, and olive oil, and relocate them to the reserved lands. The investors then employed Mazzei to travel around Europe locating and purchasing the best silk worm eggs, grape vines, and olive trees. The company quickly raised £1500 in subscription pledges and set to work implementing their plans.⁴⁰ While the project’s outcome is unknown, it represents planter-businessmen’s common and abiding interest in such commercial ventures.

In a somewhat similar scheme, a number of planter-businessmen led by John Tayloe advertised in 1771 their “Proposal for a Patriotic Store.” This store intended to sell goods at far lower rates than prevailed in Virginia at the time, limit its profit margin to 10%, limit quantities sold to any one individual or family, and sell goods only for ready money or tobacco. This approach, thought investors including Landon Carter, Richard

³⁹Dill, Carter Braxton, Virginia Signer, ix, x; WMQ 1st ser., 13 (January 1905), 289.

⁴⁰ “Proposals for forming a Company or Partnership for the Purpose of raising and making Wine, Oil, agruminous Plants, and Silk,” and “Outlines of a Plan for introducing into the Colonies . . . the different Products of Europe.”

Henry Lee, and others, would prove more advantageous to planters than the current commercial arrangements which “involv[ed] them greatly in debt, through the excessive price at which goods have for many years been sold.”⁴¹ Many planters during the 1760s and 1770s were becoming increasingly anxious about their status in society and extensive debt to British merchants.⁴²

A number of planter-businessmen operated enterprises related to their merchant activities. At least eight men participated in the shipping or shipbuilding industries. Carter Braxton owned a 50-ton schooner named *Betsey* which he used in his commercial dealings with New York and England.⁴³ Benjamin Harrison built his own ships at a large shipyard he founded and staffed with slave ship’s carpenters. In addition, he owned shares in at least one ship he left to his wife. David Ross, George Turberville, and George Washington were other shipowners. Washington purchased a brig called the *Anne & Elizabeth* at Alexandria for £175 to replace a schooner his slaves had built at Mt. Vernon, and which he had sold. Washington changed the name of his brig to the *Farmer*, and used it primarily to trade goods at the market at Alexandria.⁴⁴

⁴¹ “Proposals for a Patriotic Store,” Virginia Gazette, January 31, 1771.

⁴² T.H. Breen, Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution (Princeton, 1985), Chapter 5.

⁴³ Dill, Carter Braxton, Virginia Signer, 22. For more on the shipping and shipbuilding industries, see Converse D. Clowse, “Shipowning and Shipbuilding in Colonial South Carolina: An Overview,” American Neptune 44 (4) (1984), 221-244; William Kelso, “Shipbuilding in Virginia, 1763-1774,” Records of the Columbia Historical Society 63 (1971), 1-13; David Klingaman, “Development of the Coastwise Trade of Virginia in the Late Colonial Period,” VMHB 77 (1969), 25-45; Arthur Pierce Middleton, “Ships and Shipbuilding in the Chesapeake Bay and Tributaries,” in Ernest M. Eller, ed., The Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution (Centreville, Md., 1981), 98-132.

⁴⁴ Dew, “David Ross and the Oxford Iron Works,” 190; Inventory of Major George Turberville; Will of Benjamin Harrison; Warner, Benjamin Harrison of Berkeley, 26, 33, 34; Washington’s Diaries, 1: 154, 2: 146.

Fisheries, distilleries and vineyards, and textile manufactories were other enterprises planter-businessmen ran that related directly to their merchant activities. At least five (8%) planter-businessmen operated fisheries on their estates. Henry Banks operated a fishery at the falls of the James River in Richmond; he charged a one-quarter toll for all fish anyone caught from his fishery, which amounted to as many as 215 shad per day. Ross operated a fishery at the same spot, and took in 250 fish as his highest one-day toll in May of 1796. George Fairfax operated as least four fisheries on his Belvoir Lands on the Potomac River, which he rented out for £65 per year and 20,000 herrings to Captain Edward Washington. George Washington operated a well-known fishery as well. In the spring of 1772, Washington sold over 11,000 fish, mainly herring, from his Fishing Landing on the Potomac River. He also had a standing contract for his fish during the 1770s with an Alexandria firm called Herbert & Co.⁴⁵

Many planter-businessmen also engaged in the making of wine and spirits. At least 11% (7/65) of planters operated or invested in wineries or distilleries. Richard Atkinson supported a number of winemaking schemes during the 1760s. Nathaniel Burwell operated a well-known distillery on his Frederick County estate. Landon Carter distilled brandy at Sabine Hall during the 1770s, and frequently rented out his still for a profit. Robert Beverley inherited a vineyard which produced 400 gallons of wine per year. George Mason was an active investor in viticulture. He campaigned on behalf of Maurice Pound, a Rhinelander, to raise money for a vineyard Pound wished to establish

⁴⁵Plan, June 5, 1797, Henry Banks Papers; "Sketch of the lower end of the Falls of James River, Virginia," April 8, 1796, Edward C. Carter II, John C. Van Home, and Charles E. Brownell, eds., Latrobe's View of America, 1795-1820: Selections from the Water Colors and Sketches (New Haven, 1985), 70-71; "Bataille Muse's Return"; Washington's Diaries, 2: 62, 3: 28.

in Colchester. George Fairfax and George Washington were among those who subscribed to Pound's failed venture. Washington also owned a distillery on his Dogue Creek lands.⁴⁶

At least 12% (8/65) of the planter-businessmen operated small textile manufactories on their estates. These plantation craft shops largely produced thread, yarn, cloth, and clothing for the resident slave population. However, many planters offered the surrounding neighborhood their slaves' skills in clothmaking to turn a profit. Landon Carter established a "weaving Manufactory" equipped with "2 Looms & Gear, 1 quil wheel, 1 Cotton Gin, 4 Flax wheels, 5 great wheels, 7 pr Cotton cards, 5 pair wool cards, 6 Slays, 1 coarse Hackle, 2 pr Tow cards, [and] 1 pr. Clothiers cards." Carter considered this enterprise extensive enough to require the constant supervision of a skilled white artisan; he therefore offered to pay James Crow of Augusta County £60 annual salary to work as a flax, wool, and cotton manufacturer.⁴⁷ George Mason employed numerous slaves in the trades of spinning, weaving, knitting, and shoemaking. Mason's skilled slaves manufactured all the clothing and shoes worn by his large slave workforce as well as much of that worn by the Mason children.⁴⁸ The Skipwith family likewise employed numerous slaves in textile production. By the nineteenth century, Sir Peyton Skipwith was investing in machines for his textile manufactory.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Bynum, Roger Atkinson, 17; Walsh, "A 'Place in Time' Regained," 24; Carter Diary, 2: 770; Copeland, Five George Masons, 101-102; Richard Norton Smith, Patriarch: George Washington and the New American Nation (Boston, 1993), 347.

⁴⁷Carter Diary, 2: 1067; Virginia Gazette, March 28, 1777; Landon Carter Inventory, February 1779, Room by Room Inventories, CWF.

⁴⁸Breen, Tobacco Culture, 87-88.

⁴⁹Box VII, Folder 65, 80; Box IX, Folder 34, 44; Box XI, Folder 1, Skipwith Papers.

Less frequently, planters engaged in small service or merchant enterprises such as tobacco warehouses, ferries, and salt works. At least three planters (5%), and likely many more, hosted tobacco warehouses on their estates. Tobacco warehouses were regulatory facilities where an official inspector would certify the quality of planters' tobacco. Once their tobacco was approved, planters received a tobacco note for their crop which traded like money, and the warehouse manager or factor would in turn sell that tobacco on the market.⁵⁰ Moore Fauntleroy operated a tobacco warehouse at Naylor's Hole. Edmund Pendleton constructed a tobacco warehouse in Milford. Robert Carter had several more general merchant warehouses on the Potomac River. Phillip Vickers Fithian, the Carter family tutor, described these warehouses as "building[s] for the reception of Iron, Bread, Flour &c."⁵¹

Moore Fauntleroy was one of at least three (5%) planter-businessmen that operated a ferry business. He ran a ferry across the wide Rappahannock River during the 1770s, charging a toll to his passengers. George Mason operated at least two ferries: one crossed the Occoquan River and another across the Potomac River at Anacostia Island.⁵²

Two planter-businessmen engaged in salt mining and making. Robert Carter sold 400 bushels of salt during September and October, 1775, alone, charging anywhere from £5 to £19 per bushel. While most of the salt Carter produced was for his own consumption, he regularly rented out his works to neighbors for a one-tenth toll of the salt made. Benjamin Harrison owned an interest in some Gloucester County salt mines, and

⁵⁰Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790 (New York, 1982), 27-29.

⁵¹Carter Diary, 1: 76; Pendleton Papers, 589; Fithian's Journal, 144.

⁵²Carter Diary, 2: 669, 1022, 1081; Copeland, Five George Masons, 87.

bequeathed to his wife “my share of the salt pans in Gloster and the great pot I have there for the purpose of making salt.”⁵³

A significant number of planters engaged in heavy industries, operating iron furnaces and forges as well as a variety of mining enterprises.⁵⁴ At least 14% (9/65) of planter-businessmen owned and operated ironworks, while 11% (7/65) invested in iron, coal, copper, and other mines. Several owned interests in both endeavors. Robert Carter was one such iron master. Carter owned a one-fifth interest in the Baltimore Iron Works, a prominent and successful Maryland company which operated between the 1730s and the 1770s.⁵⁵ His share in the company’s works and mines was valued at approximately £10,000 and netted him a minimum annual income of £500 currency.⁵⁶

David Ross was another important Virginia iron master. Ross acquired the Oxford Ironworks in Campbell County during the 1770s. The Oxford Ironworks was an iron plantation with a forge, bloomery, and iron banks consisting of over 6,000 acres

⁵³Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 183-184; Will of Benjamin Harrison. For more on the colonial salt industry, see Larry Gene Bowman, “The Scarcity of Salt in Virginia during the American Revolution,” VMHB 77 (1969), 464-472.

⁵⁴The literature on the colonial southern iron industry is extensive. See, for example, Arthur Cecil Bining, British Regulation of the Colonial Iron Industry (Clifton, N.J.); Kathleen Bruce, Virginia Iron Manufactures in the Slave Era (New York, 1968); Edward Heite, “The Pioneer Phase of the Chesapeake Iron Industry: Naturalization of a Technology,” Quarterly Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Virginia 38 (3) (1983), 133-181; Ronald Lewis, Coal, Iron, and Slaves: Industrial Slavery in Maryland and Virginia, 1715-1865 (Westport, Conn., 1979). See also, John Bezis-Selfa, “Slavery and the Disciplining of Free Labor in the Colonial Mid-Atlantic Iron Industry,” Pennsylvania History 64 (Summer 1997), 270-286. Studies of individual works include Charles B. Dew, Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge (New York, 1994); Dew, “David Ross and the Oxford Iron Works,” 189-224; Michael W. Robbins, The Principio Company: Iron-Making in Colonial Maryland, 1720-1781 (New York, 1986); William Reynolds, “An Account of the Albemarle Ironworks,” The Magazine of Albemarle County History 50 (1992), 39-57; Johnson, “Genesis of the Baltimore Company,” 157-179; G. McClaren Brydon, “The Bristol Iron Works in King George County,” VMHB 42 (2) (April 1934), 97-102.

⁵⁵See Keach Johnson, “Genesis of the Baltimore Company,” JSH 19 (May 1953), 157-179.

⁵⁶Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 39, 166; 1787 deed, Carter Family Papers, Mss1C2468a2057, VHS.

which annually produced at least 1,600 tons of pig iron within the first decade of Ross's management. Ross expanded the business to include a casting business in connection with the state-owned Westham Foundry. During the nineteenth century, Oxford grew under Ross's oversight to over 24,000 acres including a furnace, several large forges, a smith shop, several mills, and a variety of mines. In addition to Oxford, Ross also invested in and operated several other works. He worked as a partner in Calloway's Furnace, also in Campbell, was the likely owner of Stonewall Furnace in Appomatox County, and founded two other works on his lands in Tennessee (see Appendix 2).⁵⁷

Archibald Cary also owned interests in both mining and ironworking. Cary founded a series of furnaces and foundries on Falling Creek in Chesterfield County, and supplied his works with iron ore from mines he opened in Buckingham County.⁵⁸ William Cabell, Edward Carter, and Alexander Trent formed the partnership that managed the Albemarle Ironworks in Albemarle County. George Fairfax owned a quarter interest in the Shannondale Bloomery Works. Charles and Robert Carter each owned a quarter interest in the Frying Pan Copper Mine in Fairfax and Loudoun Counties. Similarly, Richard Adams and David Ross both invested in and operated coal mines in western Virginia.⁵⁹ Ironmaking and mining were profitable businesses that could double

⁵⁷Dew, "David Ross and the Oxford Works," 192-194; William Peden, ed., Notes on the State of Virginia by Thomas Jefferson, (New York, 1982), 27-28.

⁵⁸Brock, Archibald Cary of Amptill, 12.

⁵⁹William Reynolds, "An Account of the Albemarle Iron Works," The Magazine of Albemarle County History 50 (1992), 46, 48, 52; George Fairfax Will; Charles Carter Will; Morton, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, 19; Richard Adams Will, January 3, 1800, VHS; Ledger, Acc. 22408b, LVA.

a planter's annual income and provided important hedges against depressions in the tobacco market.

Some of the 100 wealthiest Virginians during the revolutionary era shared several other important characteristics. At least 17% (11/65) worked part-time in the legal or medical professions. Theoderick Bland and Moore Fauntleroy were both physicians, while Cuthbert Bullitt, Francis Corbin, Patrick and James Henry, Edmund Pendleton, Edmund and Peyton Randolph, and John Taylor served as lawyers. Most of the 100 also held some level of political office during their lifetimes. Planter-businessmen's political and economic activities were intricately intertwined. Politics introduced planters to established political leaders and to other planter-businessmen, provided them with partnership and investment contacts, and educated them about how to lobby for enterprise-friendly legislation. Conversely, the more wealthy a planter was, the more likely he would be considered by his county neighbors to be an influential man and thus an appropriate candidate for a host of county and colony-wide offices.⁶⁰

Planter-businessmen held political offices at every level of government.⁶¹ Thirty-six of the 100 represented their resident counties as burgesses. These same planters

⁶⁰Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia, 133-135; Braun, "The Rise of a Rural Class of Entrepreneurs," 554; Aubrey Land, The Dulanys of Maryland: A Biographical Study of Daniel Dulany the Elder and Daniel Dulany the Younger (Baltimore, 1955).

⁶¹Much of this information comes from E. G. Swem and John W. Williams, compilers, A Register of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1776-1918 (Richmond, 1918), *passim*; "Public Officers in Virginia, 1702, 1714," Virginia Historical Magazine 2 (1895), 1-15; "The Colonial Council of Virginia," WMQ 1st ser., 3 (1) (July 1894), 65-67; John Pendleton Kennedy, Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia (Richmond, 1915), *passim*; Carter Diary, 1: 66; H. R. McIlwaine, ed., Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (Richmond, 1925), *passim*; H. R. McIlwaine, ed., Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia (Richmond, 1979), *passim*; William P. Palmer, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts (New York, 1968), *passim*; "Proceedings of Virginia's Committees of Correspondence, 1759-1767," VMHB 12 (1) (July 1904), 1-14; W. Noel Sainsburg, ed., Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies (Vaduz, 1964), *passim*. Individual county and family papers were also useful in identifying planters' political activities.

frequently held a variety of local offices as well, including sheriff, magistrate, militia officer, surveyor, or vestryman (an important position in the church, which also involved certain public duties shouldered by government after the Revolution). At least six of the 100 served on the Governor's Council, a powerful body that helped shape policy and legislation. In addition, six were members of the Continental Congress and a number signed the Declaration of Independence. Planter-businessmen participated in the new state government as well. Thirty-two of the 100 were elected to the House of Delegates and 10 to the Virginia State Senate. Eight of the 100 served as governors of Virginia, including Benjamin Harrison, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Nelson, Wilson Nicholas, John Page, Edmund Randolph, and Thomas Mann Randolph. Moreover, John Taylor, Edmund Randolph, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson went on to secure national offices, including the United States presidency. Political office provided planter-businessmen with some of the most important tools required to diversify their business interests successfully. In turn, the wealth and social standing that resulted from planter-businessmen's entrepreneurialism furthered their political clout.

Business enterprise and diversification characterized Virginia's planter class in early America. The wealthiest planters invested in, operated, founded, and owned a variety of speculative, commercial, craft, and industrial companies. In addition, the records suggest that middling planters demonstrated and aspired to such entrepreneurialism as well.⁶² Like John Tayloe II, a model planter-businessman, Virginia's planters regularly and confidently pursued a variety of business and industrial

⁶²Richard Bushman came to a similar conclusion. See Bushman, "Markets and Composite Farms in Early America," *WMQ* 3d ser., 55 (3) (July 1998), 368.

investments and opportunities in addition to their diversified agricultural endeavors.

Virginia planters in the eighteenth century were astute and realistic about the fluctuating nature of the tobacco market, and accordingly constructed hedges to insulate their own financial security and social status from downturns in the market. That most planter-businessmen owned such large populations of enslaved African Americans in an economy in which agriculture was becoming less labor-intensive both necessitated entrepreneurialism and made possible its long-term maintenance. A diversified approach to business and agriculture allowed planters to employ their slaves profitably throughout the year. For their part, slaves quickly demonstrated their adaptability and effectiveness in a variety of skilled and unskilled agricultural, craft, and industrial occupations. Moreover, planters' business interests were a significant, stable, and constant part of their overall financial portfolio. As Tayloe's activities demonstrate, planters frequently pursued business enterprises during good economic times and rarely abandoned their new businesses when tobacco rebounded after a market contraction. Planter-businessmen built an economy dependent upon and characterized by the thorough integration of business and agriculture. Commercial agriculture and business enterprise together fueled economic growth and individual wealth in early Virginia.

CONCLUSION

ENTREPRENEURIALISM IN EARLY VIRGINIA

Eighteen twenty-eight was a year of change for the Tayloe family. In the spring, John Tayloe III died in his bed at his city house called the Octagon. His burial arrangements reflected much about his life. As he had expressed a wish to be buried in the family cemetery at Mt. Airy, his sons “came with the remains to the Steam Boat for Fred[ericksbur]g” and took a private hearse from there to Mt. Airy. In patronizing the steam boat, his sons paid tribute to one of the very projects in which the elder Tayloe had so strongly believed and so heavily invested during his life. He had also expressed another wish in the explicit directions he left his sons about *how* he was to be buried. His son William marveled at Tayloe’s confidence, practicality, and perhaps even humor when he remarked to a relative, “You can better judge of Father’s composure” in preparing to meet “the King of Terrors . . . when you know he even directed to be buried in his flanel [sic] gown.”¹ With God and the elite society of the Northern Neck as his witnesses, Tayloe remained inventive and self-assured until the end.

The death of John Tayloe III marked the first time the Tayloe estate was divided through inheritance. Each of the earlier generations had included only one son, meaning

¹William Henry Tayloe, Washington, to Lucy Gwynn Page Tidball, March 22, 1828, Louise Patten Papers, Virginia Historical Society [hereafter VHS], Mss1P2775a49. A large part of the Tayloe Family Papers at the VHS have been microfilmed as part of the Records of Ante-Bellum Southern Plantations, Series M, Part 1: The Tayloe Family. These papers will hereafter be expressed as TFP, Reel: Frame, to distinguish them from Tayloe family collections that are not part of the microfilm collection located at the VHS and other repositories.

that, at the death of the patriarch, a sole male heir inherited the entire estate intact. The Tayloes' ability to keep the entire estate together across the entire eighteenth century was one of the most important factors in their sustained success as planter-businessmen. That changed with the death of the third John Tayloe, who had thirteen children, six of whom were sons. Tayloe divided his Virginia, Maryland, Washington, and Kentucky lands among his children, creating numerous smaller but prosperous plantations from what had been an exceptionally sizeable, diverse, and widespread estate.² Furthering a trend begun during their father's lifetime, Tayloe's children turned their attention to opportunities and interests outside of their ancestral Virginia. Several sons undertook cotton planting in Alabama; Benjamin spent his life in the social whirls of Washington and New York; Edward made a career of military service. William Henry continued to manage his share of Mt. Airy as he had done before his father's death. Having absorbed the family tradition of enterprise, he owned and rented lots in Washington City, owned cotton plantations in Alabama as an absentee owner, supported internal improvement and transportation projects, and invested thousands of dollars in government stocks, bonds, and other financial institutions.³

The Tayloes were planter-businessmen. Each expressed his entrepreneurial bent in different ways, responding to specific social and economic factors that characterized their respective lifetimes. Each had his share of successes, failures, and near-misses but, more importantly, each attempted to make the most of what he had in order to secure a

²Will of John Tayloe III, 1828, TFP, 6: 407-434.

³Will of William Henry Tayloe, May 8, 1869, TFP, 28: 238-239; William Henry Tayloe Estate Accounts, 1871-1886, TFP, 28: 243.

comfortable life, or “competency,” for himself and his heirs.⁴ Each produced for the market and responded to changes within it. For each of the Tayloes, slave labor served as the fundamental resource for the machine of entrepreneurialism. The presence of large populations of enslaved African Americans enabled the Tayloes and other planters to branch out from staple agriculture and ultimately necessitated that they continue to do so. Slaves demonstrated their abilities, became central to the daily operations of the South’s business culture, and made the enterprises planters founded profitable. As planter-businessmen, the Tayloes participated in a burgeoning “culture of progress”—an early American culture of capitalism interpreted in many different ways throughout the colonies (and later the states) that had the pursuit of a better life as its organizing premise.⁵

Entrepreneurialism—a diversified approach to plantation management that encompassed commercial agriculture and a diverse array of merchant, industrial, and other business services—characterized early Virginia’s culture of progress. The Tayloes were not alone in their ironmaking, shipbuilding, land speculation, investing, and craft-service activities. Instead, the three generations of Tayloe planter-businessmen represent the activities, approaches, and values of the elite planter class. Indeed, there are many preliminary indications in the records that the entrepreneurialism that characterized the big planters increasingly represented the middling planters as well.

⁴ Daniel Vickers, “Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America,” William and Mary Quarterly 3d ser., 47 (1990), 3-4 and *passim*.

⁵ Carol Sheriff, The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862 (New York, 1996), Chapter I.

Planter-businessmen as individuals founded businesses that were usually complementary in some way to their holdings in land and slaves. For more capital-intensive enterprises, they called on their familial, social, and political networks for partners. Recognizing the potentially dangerous fluctuations of the tobacco market, planters were apt to attempt new endeavors in good times and bad and rarely abandoned new businesses simply because the tobacco market rebounded. They employed an effective and reliable workforce that proved profitable in a variety of business situations. They kept their finger on the pulse of the market, braved risk, and attempted to keep up with the latest technology.

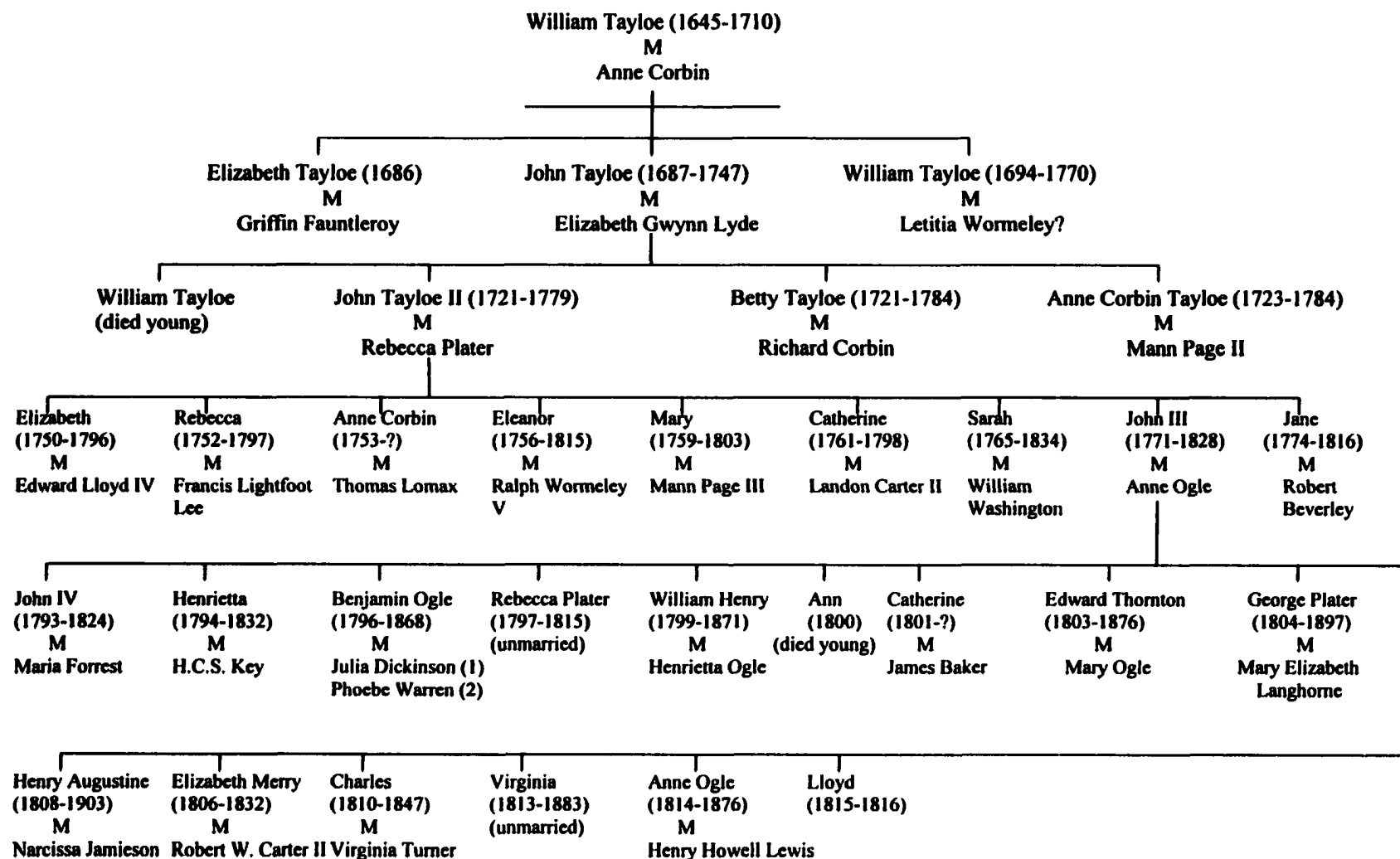
In some instances, planters' non-tobacco enterprises landed them a significant annual income—one that was sometimes as significant as that from tobacco or even more so. In all instances, planters' non-tobacco activities provided an important buffer between the uncontrollable weather, shipping, and prices associated with tobacco agriculture and their family's future security. Demonstrating their business acumen, they adjusted to new economic situations when prudent—several examples include the mid-eighteenth century shift to wheat and the post-revolutionary westward move of the iron industry.

The institution of slavery certainly placed some structural limits on planters' entrepreneurial imaginations. For example, there was always the problem of what to do with their slaves if planters wanted to focus entirely on something not requiring extensive labor; before the Civil War, of course, planters answered this question by selling their slaves to other planters who still required such labor. However, whether compared against northern farmer-businessmen prior to the antebellum period or set against the

definitions of Virginia's own slave society, early southern planter-businessmen exhibited rational and progressive economic behavior.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 TAYLOE FAMILY GENEALOGY



APPENDIX 2

THE CHESAPEAKE IRON INDUSTRY, KNOWN FURNACES AND FORGES, CA. 1700-1830^a

Ironworks Name:	Furnace, Forge, Both?:	County:	Owner(s):	Dates of Operation:	# Hands:	Annual Production:
•Falling Creek	Furnace	Chesterfield, VA		1619-1622		
•Tubal	Furnace	Spotsylvania, VA	Alexander Spotswood	1714-1780?		
•Principio	Both (4 fu, 2 fo)	MD & VA	British merchants	1720-1760?	137	2458 tons pig (1736)
•Bristol	Furnace	Westmoreland, VA	Bristol merchants, John Tayloe I	1721-1742		
•Pine	Forge	Shenandoah, VA		1725-1835	47	170 tons/yr (1820)
•Accokeek	Furnace	Stafford, VA	Principio Company	1726-1753	26	500 tons/yr
•Massaponax Air	Furnace	Spotsylvania, VA	Alexander Spotswood	1727-1760		
•Fredericksville	Furnace	Spotsylvania, VA	Charles Chiswell, Alex Spotswood	1728-1760?	100	
•Baltimore	Both (2, 2)	Baltimore, MD	D. Dulany, Carrolls, B. Tasker	1731-1770?	150	376 tons (1750)
•Germanna	Furnace	Spotsylvania, VA	Alexander Spotswood	1732-		
•Snowden	Both	Anne Arundel, MD	John Snowden	1734-1776		
•Neabsco	Furnace	Prince William, VA	John Tayloe I, II	1737-1810?	40	
•Stagland	Forge	Richmond City, VA	William Byrd II	1740?-1800		
•Vestal	Forge	Jefferson, VA	Thomas Maybury	1742-		
•Kingsbury	Furnace	MD		1744-		
•Bush River	Furnace	MD	Webster, Hall, Giles	1746-		
•Nottingham	Both	Baltimore, Harford, MD		1746-1765	153	
•Concord	Forge	Spotsylvania, VA	Benjamin Gryme, Wm Champe	1750-1771		
•Cumberland	Forge	Harford, MD		1750?-		

^aInformation for Appendix 1 comes from the following sources: Iron Industry Reports, Tate Thompson Brady Papers, Virginia Historical Society; Tayloe Family Papers, VHS; Virginia Gazette; Maryland Gazette; William Peden, ed., Notes on the State of Virginia by Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1982); Michael Robbins, The Principio Company: Iron-Making in Colonial Maryland, 1720-1781 (New York, 1986); David Curtis Skaggs, "John Semple and the Development of the Potomac River Valley, 1750-1773," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 92 (3) (1984), 287; William Reynolds, "An Account of the Albemarle Iron Works," The Magazine of Albemarle County History 50 (1992), 39-57; Arthur Cecil Bining, British Regulation of the Colonial Iron Industry (Clifton, N.J., 1973); Keach Johnson, "Genesis of the Baltimore Company," Journal of South History 19 (May 1953), 157-179; Frances C. Robb, "Industry in the Potomac River Valley, 1760-1860," unpublished dissertation, West Virginia University, 1991; Ronald Hoffman, A Spirit of Dissension: Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland (Baltimore, 1973); Edward Heite, "The Pioneer Phase of the Chesapeake Iron Industry: Naturalization of a Technology," Quarterly Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Virginia 38 (3) (1983), 133-181.

Ironworks Name:	Furnace, Forge, Both?:	County:	Owner(s):	Dates of Operation:	# Hands:	Annual Production:
•Recovery	Furnace	Spotsylvania, VA	Benjamin Gryme, A. Thornton	1750-1771		
•Rock	Forge	Harford, MD	George Rock	1750?-		
•Providence	Forge	New Kent, VA	William Holt	1755?-1784?		
•Elk Ridge	Furnace	Howard, MD	Dorsey	1756-		
•Mossy Creek	Both	Augusta, VA	John Miller	1757-1767		"600 tons/yr" (TJefferson)
•Marley	Furnace	Harford, MD	Dorsey	1759-		
•Northampton	Both	Baltimore, MD	Charles Ridgely	1759-1829		
•Occoquan	Forge	Prince William, VA	Tayloe II, Thornton, Ballendine	1759-1780?	50	
•Occoquan	Furnace	Prince William, VA	Tayloe II, Thornton, Ballendine	1755-1782	50	
•Elk	Forge	Cecil, MD		1760-1781	16	
•Grant's	Furnace	Rockbridge, VA		1760?-		
•Gryme's	Forge	Spotsylvania, VA	Benjamin Gryme	1760?-		
•Hampton	Furnace	Emmitsburg, MD		1760-		
•Hockley	Forge	Harford, MD	Dorsey	1760-		
•Isabella (Redwell) Furnace		Page, VA		1760-1841	150	220 tons, 300 ton castgs/yr (1820)
•Marlboro	Forge	Frederick, VA	Isaac Zane?	1760-1828		"150 tons bar/wk" (TJefferson)
•Mossy Creek	Furnace	Augusta, VA	Henry Miller	1760-1841		
•Zane's	Furnace	Frederick, VA	Isaac Zane	1760?-1845?		
•Onion	Both (1 fu, 2 fo)	Joppa, MD	Stephen Onion	1760?-1770?		
•Unicorn	Forge	Queen Anne's, MD		1760?-1770?		
•Moore's	Forge	King and Queen, VA	Bernard Moore	1761-1781	53	
•Potts-Wilson	Forge	Fairfax, VA	John Semple, Potts, Wilson	1763-1828		
•Hampton	Furnace	Emmitsburg, MD	Carroll	1764-1770?		
•Legh	Furnace	Carroll, MD		1765-1770?		
•Nottingham	Furnace	Baltimore, MD	Charles Ridgely	1765-		
•Antietam	Forge	Washington, MD	Samuel Hughes	1766-1865		
•Frederick	Forge	Washington, MD	Samuel Hughes	1766-		
•Antietam	Furnace	Washington, MD	Samuel Hughes	1768-1865		
•Green Spring	Furnace	Washington, MD	James Johnson & Co.	1768-1779?		
•Jacques	Forge	Washington, MD		1770-		
•Legh	Furnace	Frederick, VA	Legh Master	1770?-		
•Albemarle	Both	Albemarle, VA	John Old	1771-1796		

Ironworks Name:	Furnace, Forge, Both?:	County:	Owner(s):	Dates of Operation:	# Hands:	Annual Production:
•Mt. Aetna	Furnace	Washington, MD	Samuel Hughes	1771-1850?		
•Old's	Forge	Albemarle, VA	John Old	1771-1796		
•Marlboro	Furnace	Frederick, VA	Isaac Zane?	1772-1828		"600 tons/yr" (TJefferson)
•Washington	Both	Franklin, VA	Donelson, Calloway, Early	1774-1850	200	
•Catoctin	Furnace	Catoctin, MD	James Johnson & Co.	1774-1900?		12-18 tons/wk
•Bush Creek	Forge	Catoctin, MD	James Johnson & Co.	1774-		
•Bear Garden	Furnace	Buckingham, VA	John Ballendine?	1775-1840		"1000 tons/yr" (TJefferson)
•Maho (Fawcett)	Furnace	Rockingham, VA	Benjamin Fawcett, Benj Savage	1775-1816		
•Oxford	Furnace	Campbell, VA	David & Frederick Ross	1775-1837	500	"1600 tons/yr" (TJefferson)
•Rappahannock	Forge	Stafford, VA	James Hunter	1775?		"300 tons bar/yr" (TJefferson)
•Spring	Forge	Rockingham, VA		1775-		
•Westham	Forge	Richmond City, VA	John Ballendine	1776-		
•Calloway's	Forge	Franklin, VA	Calloway	1779-		"150 tons bar/yr" (TJefferson)
•Calloway's	Furnace	Campbell, VA	J. Calloway, David Ross	1779-1837		"600 tons/yr" (TJefferson)
•Dougherty	Forge	Rockbridge, VA		1779?-1840		
•Broce's	Forge	Montgomery, VA		1780-	200 lbs/day	
•Marshall	Furnace	Rockingham, VA		1780?-		
•Speedwell Providence	Furnace	Wythe, VA		1781?-1866		
•Shelor's	Furnace	Floyd, VA	Daniel Shelor	1785-1815		
•Brunswick	Forge	Botetourt, VA	John Tayloe III	1786-1851		145 tons bar/yr (1820)
•Cloverdale	Furnace	Botetourt, VA	Robt Harvey, Beverley, Tayloe III	1787-1849	124	600 tons bar, 30 tons cast/yr (1820)
•Harvey's	Forge	Botetourt, VA	Robert Harvey	1787?-1825		100 tons bar/yr (1820)
•Martha	Furnace	Botetourt, VA	Robert Harvey	1787?-1825		230 tns bar, 20 tns hware/yr (1820)
•Speedwell	Both	Roanoke, VA	Robert Harvey	1787-1825		
•Keep Tryst	Furnace	Jefferson, WV	John Potts, William Wilson	1788?-		
•Stonewall	Furnace	Appomattox, VA	David Ross?	1788-1845		
•McClure	Forge	Rockbridge, VA	McClure	1789?-1820	16	
•Moore's	Furnace	Rockbridge, VA		1789?-1829		
•Carron	Furnace	Franklin, VA		1790-1860		
•David Ross	Forge	Hawkins, TN	David Ross	1790-1864		
•David Ross	Furnace	Sullivan, TN	David Ross	1790-		
•Elk	Forge	Franklin, VA		1792-1820?		

Ironworks Name:	Furnace, Forge, Both?:	County:	Owner(s):	Dates of Operation:	# Hands:	Annual Production:
•Etna	Furnace	Botetourt, VA	Wilson, Maybury, Wm Weaver	1792-1859		1100 tons, 20 tons hware/yr (1820)
•Point Hope	Both	Grayson, VA	Matthew Dickey	1792?- 1792-1890		
•Wythe	Furnace	Wythe, VA	James Byrne, William Love	1792-1890		
•Harvey's	Forge	Franklin, VA	Robert Harvey	1795-		
•Williams'	Forge	Bath, VA	Elisha Williams	1795-	3	
•Slitting Mill	Forge	Botetourt, VA	John Tayloe III	1797-1851		
•Poplar Camp	Furnace	Wythe, VA	David Pierce	1798-1820s		
•Union (Paoli)	Forge	Shenandoah, VA	Blackford & Arthur	1799-1850	45	
•Beverley	Furnace	Rockbridge, VA	McClure	1800?-1818		
•Buffalo	Forge	Rockbridge, VA	William Weaver	1800-1868	20	150 tons bar/yr (1850)
•Gibraltar	Forge	Rockbridge, VA	T. Maybury, S. Jordan, Davis	1800-1845		
•Graham's	Forge	Wythe, VA	David Graham	1800-1856	31	161 tons blooms, 23 tons bar/yr
•John's Creek	Forge	Craig, VA		1800-1830		
•Jordan's	Furnace	Rockbridge, VA	John Jordan	1800-1860?		
•Lagrange	Furnace	Appomatox, VA		1800-1843		
•Lydia	Furnace	Rockbridge, VA	William Moore, William Weaver	1800-1850		
•McClure's	Foundry	Rockbridge, VA	McClure	1800?-1818		
•Mount Torry	Furnace	Augusta, VA		1800-1885		
•Port Republic	Forge	Rockingham, VA	John Carthrea	1800-1870s		
•Retreat	Furnace	Botetourt, VA	William Wilson, Thomas Maybury	1800-1815		
•Rumsey	Furnace	Alleghany, VA		1800?-1854		
•Union B	Forge	Augusta, VA		1800-1850		
•Tilthammer	Forge	Bath, VA	Elisha Williams	1800-1840		
•Cranberry	Furnace	Carroll, VA		1801-1840		
•Columbia	Furnace	Shenandoah, VA		1803-1823?	115	560 tons/yr (1820)
•Shenandoah	Both	Page, VA (Elkton, WV)		1805-1863		
•Catawba	Furnace	Botetourt, VA		1807-1849		
•BellonaForge		Chesterfield, VA	John Clarke	1810-1877		
•Mount Vernon	Forge	Rockingham, VA		1810-1855		150 tons/yr
•Raven Cliff	Furnace	Wythe, VA	Joseph Bell	1810-1856		
•Speedwell #1	Forge	Page, VA		1811-		
•Kennedy (Canada)	Furnace	Augusta, VA		1812-1820		

Ironworks Name:	Furnace, Forge, Both?:	County:	Owner(s):	Dates of Operation:	# Hands:	Annual Production:
•Tilthammer	Forge	Franklin, VA	Townes	1814-1819		
•Garber	Foundry	Augusta, VA	Albert Garber	1815-	5	65 tons castings/yr
•Speedwell #2	Forge	Page, VA		1815-		
•Fine Creek	Forge	Powhatan, VA	McRae, Brooks, & Archer	1816-1823		
•Cumberland Gap	Furnace	Lee, VA		1819-1873		800 tons/35 wks
•Rebecca	Furnace	Botetourt, VA	William Ross	1819-1863		
•Beechenbrook	Foundry	Rockbridge, VA	John Jordan	1820-1890		
•Blue Spring	Furnace	Alleghany, VA	John Jordan	1820-1840		
•Henrietta	Furnace	Shenandoah, VA		1820-1864		
•Liberty	Furnace	Shenandoah, VA		1821-1905		387 tons/20 wks
•Capon	Furnace	Hardy, WV		1822-		300 tons/16 wks
•Clifton	Forge	Alleghany, VA	John Jordan	1824-	30	150 tons bar/yr
•Elk Creek	Furnace	Nelson, VA		1824-1850		
•Brown's	Forge	Washington, VA	James Brown	1825-1841	15	2.5 tons bar/yr
•James River	Forge	Botetourt, VA	William Ross	1825-1848		
•Lebanon Valley	Forge	Rockbridge, VA		1825-		
•Lime Rock	Furnace	Litchfield, VA		1825-		205 tons/22 wks (1856)
•Bath	Forge	Rockbridge, VA	William Weaver	1827-1850	60	160 tons bar/yr (1829)
•Lucy Selina	Furnace	Alleghany, VA	Ira Jordan	1827-1852	70	1250 tons, 25 tons castgs/yr (1850)
•Liberty	Forge	Shenandoah, VA	Walter Newman	1828-		

APPENDIX 3 THE ONE HUNDRED¹

<i>Name:</i>	<i>Home County:</i>	<i>Total Acreage:</i> ²	<i>Total #</i>
<i>Slaves:</i>			
Richard Adams (1726-1800)	Henrico/Richmond City ³	19,061.5	108
William Alexander (1726-1804)	Prince William	4,981	71
William Allen (d. 1793)	Surry	22,846	700
John Ambler (1762-1836)	James City	9,745	191
John Armistead ⁴	Caroline	6,055	147
Roger Atkinson (1725-1784)	Petersburg	41,079	100
Henry Banks (1761-1836)	Richmond City	82,591	1
Burwell Bassett (d. 1793)	New Kent	6,124	185
John Baylor (1750-1808)	Caroline	13,161	219
Edmund Berkeley III	Middlesex	12,987	242
Robert Beverley (1740-1800)	Essex	48,988	592
Theoderick Bland (1708-1784?)	Prince George	4,759	74
William Blunt (d. 1820)	Sussex	6,317	134
Carter Braxton (1736-1797)	King William	33,000	165
William Brent (d. 1786)	Stafford	6,887	81
Cuthbert Bullitt (d. 1791)	Prince William	27,716	37
Lewis Burwell IV (1716-1784)	James City/Mecklenburg	11,421	172
Nathaniel Burwell II (1750-1814)	James City	11,942	179
Joseph Cabell	Buckingham	5,160	85
William Cabell (1730-1798)	Amherst	15,237	93
Charles Carter (1732-1808)	Charles City	44,468	785
Edward Carter (1733-1792)	Albemarle	20,550	297
George Carter	Lancaster	9,708	219
John Carter (1748-1817?)	Loudoun	11,042	144
Landon Carter (1710-1778)	Richmond	21,316	326
Robert Carter III (1728-1804)	Westmoreland	60,635.5	445
Robert W. Carter (1734-1797)	Richmond	10,533	184
Archibald Cary (1721-1787)	Chesterfield	17,372	240
W. Miles Cary (1737-1817)	Elizabeth City	11,426	294
William Churchill (1727-1799)	Middlesex	4,865	89
Allen Cocke	Surry	9,011	111
Chastain Cocke (1743-1795)	Powhatan	7,234	81
John Cocke	Surry	4,494	97
John H. Cocke (1780-1866)	Surry/Fluvanna	5,011	114
Francis Corbin (1759-1821)	Middlesex	4,194	119
Gawin Corbin	Caroline	4,918	125
Richard Corbin (1708-1790)	King and Queen	14,572	264

¹See also, Jackson Turner Main, "The One Hundred," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3d ser., 11 (1954), 354-384.

²The figures in the total acreage and total number of slaves categories are based on the "manuscript totals" described in Chapter 6, note 2.

³Indicates relocation of home plantations.

⁴I could not find birth and death dates for all members of the list. When the dates listed are uncertain, a '?' will be placed after the dates.

<i>Name:</i>	<i>Home County:</i>	<i>Total Acreage:</i>	<i>Total #</i>
<i>Slaves:</i>			
John P. Custis (1755-1781?)	New Kent	13,786	208
Nicholas Davis	Bedford	27,747	50
Francis Eppes (1747-1808)	Chesterfield	8,418.5	153
Francis Eppes (d. 1789)	Amelia	7,685	73
Moore Fauntleroy (1743-1802)	Richmond	5,595	57
George Fairfax (1724-1787)	Fairfax	75,000	91
Henry Fitzhugh (1723-1783)	King George	17,663	93
Thomas Fitzhugh (1725-1768?)	Stafford	5,447	99
William Fitzhugh (1725-1791)	King George	8,481.5	151
William Fitzhugh (1741-1809)	Stafford	21,521.5	394
Muscoe Garnett (d. 1800)	Essex	7,866	205
Philip Grymes (1746-1805?)	Middlesex	6,795	241
Benjamin Harrison (1726-1791)	Charles City	21,266	304
Carter B. Harrison	Cumberland	4,670	129
Nathaniel Harrison (1703-1791?)	Prince George	4,954	142
James Henry	King Henry	66,750	23
Patrick Henry (1736-1799)	Henrico	22,190.5	90
Adam Hunter	Stafford	8,824	128
Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)	Albemarle	12,050	149
Joseph Jones (1727-1805)	Dinwiddie	5,167	50
Peter Jones	Amelia	6,716	48
Robert Lawson	Prince William	8,789	54
Henry Lee II (1729-1787)	Westmoreland	4,626	97
Richard Lee (see note 2)	Westmoreland	6,103	138
William Lee (1737-1795)	James City	12,520.5	104
Warner Lewis (d. 1797?)	Gloucester	3,024	153
William Lightfoot (1724-1771)	Charles City	9,191	202
George Mason (1725-1792)	Fairfax	8,852	118
Stevens Mason (1760-1803)	Loudoun	6,070	71
Joseph Mayo (d. 1785)	Powhatan	11,020	200
Daniel McCarty	Westmoreland	9,598	145
Thomas Nelson (1738-1789)	Yorktown	18,156	384
Thomas Nelson (1715-1787)	King William	5,237	214
Wilson Nicholas	Albemarle	7,100	62
John Page III (1744-1808)	Gloucester	6,015	234
Mann Page III (1749-1803)	Spotsylvania	7,050	148
John Paradise (1743-c. 1800)	James City	5,699.5	83
David Patterson	Buckingham	43,477	36
Edmund Pendleton (1721-1803)	Caroline	7,283	51
John Perrin	Gloucester	4,973	173
Edmund Randolph (1753-1813)	Richmond City	7,463	101
Peyton Randolph (1738-1784)	Powhatan	15,771.5	361
Thomas Randolph (1736-?)	Henrico	5,800.5	123
Thomas M. Randolph (1768-1828)	Chesterfield	14,115	370
William Randolph (1779-1815)	Charles City	16,248	99
Thomas Roane (d. 1799)	King and Queen	10,164.5	117
William Ronald	Powhatan	11,944	200
David Ross (1740-c. 1817)	Fluvanna/Campbell	101,430	448
Edmund Ruffin (1713-1790)	Prince George	8,005	117
Henry Skipwith (1750-1815)	Buckingham	8,004	146
Peyton Skipwith (1740-1805)	Mecklenburg	6,661	235
James Southall (1726-1801)	Williamsburg	4,094	92

<i>Name:</i>	<i>Home County:</i>	<i>Total Acreage:</i>	<i>Total #</i>
<i>Slaves:</i>			
Alexander Spotswood	Spotsylvania	47,262	65
John Tabb (d. c. 1798)	Amelia	22,421	375
Richard Taliaferro	James City	5,300	109
John Tayloe II (1721-1779)	Richmond	35,000	500
John Taylor (1753-1824)	Caroline	15,907	47
Alexander Trent	Cumberland	12,839.75	100
George Turberville	Westmoreland	9,372	129
John Turberville (1737-1799)	Westmoreland	10,948	165
Robert P. Waring (d. c. 1830s)	Essex	2,830	173
George Washington (1732-1799)	Fairfax	12,175	390
Ralph Wormeley (1715-1790)	Middlesex	18,387	325

APPENDIX 4
BUSINESS, INVESTMENT, AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES
OF "THE ONE HUNDRED"¹

MILLS: 45% or 29/65

Richard Adams	Charles Carter	Philip Grymes	Thomas Roane
Richard Atkinson	Edward Carter	Benjamin Harrison	David Ross
Henry Banks	Landon Carter	Thomas Jefferson	Peyton Skipwith
John Baylor	Robert Carter	John Paradise	John Tayloe
Theodorick Bland	Archibald Cary	Edmund Pendleton	George Turberville
Carter Braxton	John Cocke	Thomas Randolph	John Turberville
Nathaniel Burwell	George Fairfax	William Randolph	Robert Waring
			George Washington

INDIVIDUAL LAND SPECULATION: 26% OR 17/65

Richard Adams	John Baylor	Patrick Henry	Edmund Pendleton
John Ambler	Richard Corbin	Thomas Jefferson	David Ross
Roger Atkinson	George Fairfax	Henry Lee	John Tayloe
Henry Banks	Henry Fitzhugh	Mann Page	John Taylor
			George Washington

MERCHANTS: 25% OR 16/65

Richard Adams	Nathaniel Burwell	Thomas Nelson	James Southall
Roger Atkinson	Patrick Henry	Edmund Pendleton	Peyton Skipwith
Henry Banks	Adam Hunter	William Ronald	John Tayloe
Carter Braxton	William Lee	David Ross	John Taylor

INVESTORS IN THE WINE, SILK AND OIL COMPANY: 23% OR 15/65

Theodorick Bland	Allen Cocke	Thomas Nelson	John Tabb
Charles Carter	Benjamin Harrison	John Page	John Tayloe
Archibald Cary	Thomas Jefferson	Mann Page	George Washington
W. Miles Cary	George Mason	Peyton Randolph	

LANDLORDS: 23% OR 15/65

Henry Banks	Edward Carter	Henry Fitzhugh	David Ross
Carter Braxton	Landon Carter	William Fitzhugh	John Tayloe
Nathaniel Burwell	Robert Carter	Benjamin Harrison	George Washington
Charles Carter	George Fairfax	John Paradise	

¹Of the 100 wealthiest Virginia planters of the revolutionary period identified by Jackson Turner Main in 1954, I have been able to find primary source material or other significant documentation for 65 of the planters. Therefore, all percentages are based on this group of planters. It is likely that more planters participated in each category and that these percentages are merely minimums.

INVESTORS IN LAND SPECULATION COMPANIES: 17% OR 11/65

Burwell Bassett	Dismal Swamp Company
Robert Carter	Ohio Company
Gawin Corbin	Ohio Company, Mississippi Company
Thomas Jefferson	Dismal Swamp Company
Richard Lee	Ohio Company, Mississippi Company
Daniel McCarty	Potomac River Company
George Mason	Ohio Company, Mississippi Company
Thomas Nelson	Dismal Swamp Company
David Ross	Virginia Yazoo Company, James River Company
John Tayloe	Patton Associates, Ohio Company, Mississippi Company
George Washington	Dismal Swamp Company, Dismal Swamp Canal Company, Potomac River Company, James River Company, Potomac Canal Company

IRONWORKS: 14% OR 9/65

William Cabell	Archibald Cary	John Tayloe
Edward Carter	George Fairfax	Alexander Trent
Robert Carter	David Ross	George Washington

TRUSTEES OF NEW TOWNS: 14% OR 9/65

Roger Atkinson	Henry Lee	Edmund Pendleton
John Baylor	Richard Henry Lee	John Tayloe
William Fitzhugh	George Mason	John Taylor

TEXTILE PRODUCTION: 12% OR 8/65

Landon Carter	George Fairfax	George Mason	Peyton Skipwith
Robert Carter	Thomas Jefferson	John Paradise	John Tayloe

MINES: 11% OR 7/65

Richard Adams	Robert Carter	Patrick Henry	John Tayloe
Charles Carter	Archibald Cary	David Ross	

DISTILLERIES/WINEMAKING: 11% OR 7/65

Roger Atkinson	Nathaniel Burwell	Robert Carter	George Washington
Robert Beverley	Landon Carter	George Mason	

FISHERIES: 6% OR 4/65

Henry Banks	George Fairfax	John Tayloe	George Washington
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TOBACCO WAREHOUSES: 5% OR 3/65

Robert Carter	Moore Fauntleroy	Edmund Pendleton
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FERRIES: 5% OR 3/65

Moore Fauntleroy	George Mason	Peyton Skipwith
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SALT MINES OR WORKS: 3% OR 2/65

Robert Carter	Benjamin Harrison
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GINSENG SPECULATION: 1.5% OR 1/65

Edmund Pendleton

ROPERY: 1.5% OR 1/65

Archibald Cary

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